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Taking Your
VEGGIE GARDEN
TO THE **NEXT LEVEL**



Want to review some gardening basics?

- [How to Plan a Vegetable Garden](#)
- [Getting Started Growing Vegetable & Flower Gardens](#)
- [Tomatoes: Tips & Tricks to Maximize Your Harvest & Minimize Insect & Disease Problems](#)
- These 2021 webinars recordings and handouts are now [available on my website](#).

Starting Plants from Seeds Indoors

- [Create a Seed Starting / Growing Chart](#)

Materials Needed

- Containers
 - Purchase containers for starting seeds
 - Plastic cell packs and flats
 - Silicone Sili-Seedling
 - Paper, peat, cow pots or other biodegradable pots
 - Repurpose used pots
 - Soak in 1 part bleach, 9 parts water solution for 10 minutes, then rinse with clear water
 - [Convert yogurt and apple sauce containers into seed starting pots](#)
 - Clean and punch holes in bottom for drainage
 - Make your own paper pots
 - Newspaper rolled into pots using a Pot Maker or dowel rod
 - Repurpose cardboard core of toilet paper and paper towels
- Moist, quality sterile or pasteurized seed starting or potting mix
- Labels and permanent marker
 - Purchase labels
 - Convert old blinds, yogurt containers or other items into labels
- Bright, sunny window or better yet, artificial lights

Plant Seeds According to Label Directions

- Timing and planting depth usually on the container
- Your local Extension Service may also have a list of recommended planting dates for starting seeds indoors and directly in the garden

Gently Water to Ensure Seed-to-Soil Contact

- Cover with plastic, wet paper or other item to conserve moisture

Ebert's Greenhouse Village

When you visit Ebert's Greenhouse Village for the first time, you'll be charmed by our rustic ambiance and the beautiful surrounding countryside in Ixonia, Wisconsin. You'll meet our friendly and knowledgeable staff who share your passion for gardening and the rewarding, enjoyable life experience it provides!

Our selection of annual flowers and gorgeous hanging basket and container combinations are second to none – they are planted and cared for with your success and lasting enjoyment in mind. Our extensive collection of perennials, trees, shrubs and roses is one of the finest in Wisconsin, and our culinary herbs and vegetables can be planted with confidence! As our grounds continue to evolve, you'll see additions that will enhance your shopping experience with us. In our Gift Shoppe, we continue to build a delightful selection of indoor and outdoor home and landscape accents to inspire you to assemble an environment you will love spending time in all season long!

At Ebert's Greenhouse Village, "We Grow HAPPINESS!!"

[Learn More](#)



Label as You Plant

Place Seeded Containers in a Warm Place to Speed Germination

- Light is not needed for most seeds to sprout
- Water often enough to keep the soil slightly moist

Move to a Sunny Window or Under Artificial Lights as Soon as Green Appears

Keep Lights 4-6" (10-15cm) Above the Top of the Seedlings

- Raise the lights or lower the seeded containers as needed to maintain this distance

Turn Seedlings Growing in the Window for More Even Growth

Lights on for 14-16 Hours a Day

- Running them longer will not help the plants and wastes money and energy
- Less time, 5 hours, for those growing in natural sunlight supplemented with artificial lights

Fertilize

- Follow label directions and apply every few weeks or as needed to encourage healthy growth
- You may opt for a dilute solution and monitor plant growth and reapply as needed

Transplant

- Seedlings that were broadcast into flats
 - After two sets of true leaves appear
- Seedlings of larger plants that outgrow smaller containers

Winter Sowing

- Materials needed
 - No lights or daily watering needed
 - Milk jugs or two liter soda bottles
 - Seed starting or potting mix
 - Duct tape
 - Permanent marker
- Timing varies with your location and seeds you're starting
 - **A helpful resource**
 - I have been winter sowing seeds outdoors about the same time I would start indoors
 - Keep a record to see what timing works for you and the plants you grow
- Cut milk jug about 4" (10cm) above the bottom, leaving the portion by the handle intact
- Drill several holes in the bottom of the pot



About Melinda

Nationally known gardening expert, TV/radio host, author & columnist Melinda Myers has over 30 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books, including *Can't Miss Small Space Gardening*, the *Midwest Gardener's Handbook*, and *Jackson and Perkins' Beautiful Roses Made Easy*. She hosts the nationally-syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" program airing on over 115 TV and radio stations throughout the U.S. Melinda also hosts the internationally distributed Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series, including the latest *Food Gardening for Everyone* DVD set. She is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine, writes the twice monthly "Gardeners' Questions" newspaper column and a nationally-distributed gardening column. She appears regularly as a guest expert on national and local television and radio shows.

Visit Melinda's website,
melindamyers.com

- Fill with moist planting mix
- Plant seeds and gently water
- Label the inside and outside of the container
- Close and seal with duct tape
- Leave the cap off, allowing water and snow through
 - You will only water during dry or snow free periods
- Move to location where they receive sunlight, water or snow
- Harden off and move seedlings into the garden at the normal planting time

Harden Off Transplants

- Gradually introduce transplants to the outdoor environment
 - Stop fertilizing
 - Allow potting mix to go slightly drier
 - Start with 1 hour of sun, rest of the day in shade
 - Gradually increase the amount of sunlight the plants receive each day
- Ready to move into the garden in 1-2 weeks

Sowing Small Seeds

- Pelleted seeds
 - Coated to increase size for easier sowing
- Homemade or commercial seed tapes
 - Seeds properly spaced on biodegradable strip for easy planting
- Mix seeds with sand to help properly space seeds

Jump Starting the Season - *more on this at the April 14th webinar*

Grow New for You or More Challenging Plants to Try

Miss a Webinar?
Melinda's Webinars are Available
On Demand!



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ARTICHOKE

Cynara cardunculus scolymus

- Perennial plant hardy in Zones 6 to 9
- Imperial Star started indoors will form chokes the first season
- Full sun and moist, well-drained soil, mulch
- Plant 2 to 3 feet apart
- Harvest chokes when the bracts just begin to open
- Cut 2-3" below the bud and remove old stems once all buds picked
- Flowers support pollinators and goldfinches
- Increase winter success by cutting back to 12" and mulching
- Aphids, rabbits, ground squirrels, gophers

CUCAMELON - *Melothria scabra*

- Cucumber with crunchy cucumber citrus flavor
- Rapid growing vine can reach 10'
- Train up support - handle with care as vines are easily damaged
- Full sun and moist, well-drained soil
- Heat, drought and pest tolerant
- Harvest in 70 - 75 days
- Fruits fall off when ripe
 - AAS recipe Cucamelon Bloody Mary Salad
- Saving cucamelon seeds

MALABAR SPINACH - *Basella rubra*

- Not a true spinach - thrives in hot weather
- Edible and ornamental
- Train plants on support in container or garden bed
- Leaves have a buttery, almost nutty spinach flavor
- Purchase transplants or start seeds indoors 6 weeks before last spring frost
- Scarify (scratch) seeds before planting
 - Can take 3 weeks to sprout
- Remove flowers as they appear to maintain flavor
- Harvest as needed
- Use:
 - Eat fresh as snack or salad
 - As a wrap for sandwiches
 - Saute

MELONS

- Thrive in warm, sunny conditions and moist, well-drained soil
 - Those in cold climates, select short season varieties
 - Warm soil with black plastic or black landscape fabric if needed in colder regions
- Elevate fruit off soil to reduce risk of rot
 - Overturned plastic container with holes
 - Squash cradles
- Harvest watermelons
 - Full size, rind is dull, ground spot turns from greenish white to cream, tendrils start to curl and dry

- Store at room temperature for about a week
- Store 2-3 weeks at 45-50°F
- Harvest muskmelons
 - When fruit begins to separate from the vine
 - Store in refrigerator in plastic bag up to 10 days
 - Freeze melon balls

CAULIFLOWER

Brassica oleracea var. *botrytis*

- Needs cool temperatures and consistent moisture to thrive
- Transplants not tolerant of frost
- Heads won't develop in hot, dry weather
 - Small head never expands (buttoning)
- Too much heat, sun and nitrogen results in "ricey" heads
- Blanch for white color and milder flavor
 - Cover head when size of a quarter
 - Ready to harvest in about 5 days
 - Self-blanching varieties available

CELERY

Apium graveolens var. *dulce*

- Cool temperatures, consistently moist soil, mulch
- Set transplants outdoors 2 weeks before last frost
 - Protect with row covers
- Doesn't tolerate heat
 - Hot followed by cold causes bolting (flowering)
- Full sun, moist organic soils
- **Blanch for milder flavor**
 - Cover leaf stems (petioles) with soil, paper or cardboard at least 10 days before harvest
- Leaf Celery - *Apium graveolens* *secalinum*
 - Stronger peppery flavor used for cooking
- Grow celery plant from kitchen scraps

CELERIAC - CELERY ROOT

Apium graveolens var. *rapaceum*

- Less finicky than celery
- Full sun, moist well-drained soil
- 110-130 days from seed to harvest
- Celery flavored root
- Peel and eat root raw, roasted or in soups

LOVAGE - *Levisticum officinale*

- Hardy in Zones 4 to 8
- Grows 3 to 6' tall
- Full sun to part shade in moist, well-drained soil
- Hollow stems used as celery flavored straw

- Leaves and stems used in soups, stews and more
- Cut back plants at flowering to encourage new growth
- Or, harvest and grind seeds and use for flavoring
- **Lovage Pesto**

GARDEN HUCKLEBERRY

Solanum melanocerasum

- Member of the *Solanaceae* family
- Same care as tomatoes
- Harvest after frost for sweeter flavor
- Great for pies, jams and such

ZINGER HIBISCUS - *Hibiscus sabdariffa*

- Hardy in Zones 8 to 11, annual elsewhere
- Start 6 to 8 weeks before last spring frost
- Grow in full sun and fertile, moist not soggy soil
- Plant 8-12" apart or 16" container
- Harvest red calyxes once flowers fade
- Use fresh or air dry
- Dry for 7 to 10 days in cool, dry location
- Store in airtight container
- Crush and steep for iced tea or rum cocktail

GREENS

- Harvest regularly to keep plants producing
 - Cutting lettuce when outer leaves 4-6"
 - Chard and kale when 8-10"
- **Keep cool during harvest**
 - Submerge in cold water or place in cooler while harvesting

- Dry before storing in refrigerator
- Heat tolerant lettuce varieties
 - **Sandy**, Red Sails, Oak Leaf, Black Seeded Simpson, Muir, Adriana, Tom Thumb (butterhead), **Buttercrunch** AAS bib
- **New Zealand Spinach** - *Tetragonia tetragonoides*
 - Full sun, light shade in mid summer
 - Consistent moisture for best flavor, somewhat drought tolerant
 - Start indoors 2-3 weeks before last spring frost
 - Soak seeds 24 hours before planting
 - 14-21 days to germinate (sprout)
 - Direct seed in garden in Zones 6 and higher
- **Red Kingdom Mizuna**
- **Kale**
 - **Baby kale indoors**
- **Swiss Chard**
 - **Growing from seed**
- **Ornamental Cabbage and Kale**
- **Kalette**
 - Cross between Brussels sprouts and kale
 - Crispy, mild kale flavor with nutty hints of Brussels sprouts
 - Grow like Brussels sprouts
 - Full sun
 - Speed harvest by pinching out growing tip when bottom sprouts 1/2" in diameter
 - Harvest sprouts when 1.5-2" in diameter

ROOT CROPS THAT DON'T SPROUT OR FORM ROOTS

- Improve soil drainage
- Monitor soil nutrients
 - Milorganite and compost benefits
 - Make phosphorus (good for rooting, flowering and fruiting) and potassium (hardiness and disease resistance) available to the plants
- Grow shorts and half long carrots in heavy and rocky soil
 - Cover seeded row with lath after planting
 - Remove lath as soon as green appears

DEALING WITH SMALL SEEDS

- Use:
 - Pelleted seeds
 - Seed tapes for better spacing and less thinning
 - Make your own
 - Paper
 - Glue - 1 cup flour in 1/4 cup water

GARLIC

Allium sativum var. sativum & *ophiosco*

- Hardneck - better in north, large bulbs and complex flavors
- Softnecks best where summers are hot and winters are mild
 - Productive and store well
- **Plant** in fall after frost or early spring
 - Set cloves 2" deep and 4-6" apart
- Winter mulch in north to prevent frost heaving
- **Harvesting garlic scapes**

- **Harvesting garlic bulbs**
 - Carefully dig when 1/3 and less than 1/2 leaves turn brown
 - Cure for 3-4 weeks in warm, ventilated location
 - Remove soil, long roots and only outermost damaged papery skin
 - Store in cool, moderately humid location for up to 8 months

ASPARAGUS - *Asparagus officinalis*

- Perennial vegetable hardy in Zones 2 to 8
- **Selection**
 - Look for disease resistant and productive varieties
 - **White, purple and green varieties**
- Full sun to light shade, well-drained soil
- **Plant**
 - 6" deep and 12" apart in rows 36" apart
- **Harvesting**
 - Harvest for 1 month the following spring after planting 2 year old crowns
 - Harvest for 6 to 8 weeks 3 year and older plants
 - Snap or cut 6-8" stems off just below the ground
 - Allow ferny greens to grow and strand through winter
- Weeds biggest problem
 - Regular hand removal, mulching
- **Asparagus beetle**

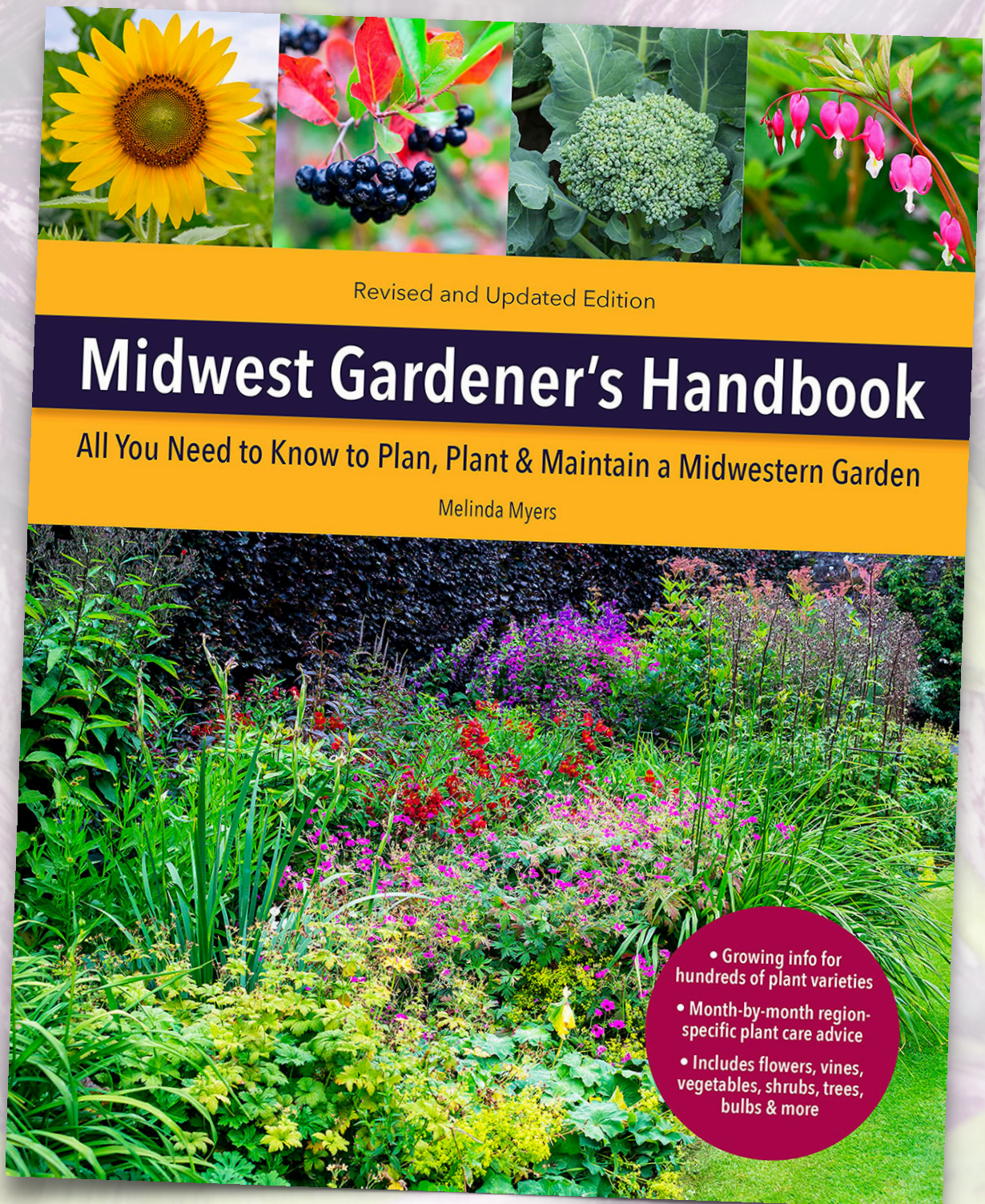
- Hand removal of beetles, larva and eggs early in the season
- Control weeds
- Fall cleanup
- Remove ferny greens at the end of the season if beetles were a problem

RHUBARB - *Rheum rhubarbarum*

- Long lived perennial hardy in Zones 3 to 8
- Eat the leaf stem (petiole), not flat part (blade) that is toxic
- Start as plants or roots
 - Plant roots with crowns 1-2" below soil surface
- **Harvest**
 - 2 year old plants for 1-2 weeks
 - Older plants for 8-10 weeks
 - Pull or twist outer stalks when 10-15"
 - Limit harvest season for health of plant
- Remove flower stalk as soon as it appears
- **Holes in rhubarb leaves**

HORSERADISH - *Armoracia rusticana*

- Aggressive, long lived perennial hardy in Zones 2 to 9
 - Hard to remove once established
 - ◉ Plant in container above or below ground
- Full sun to light shade and prefers moist, well-drained soil
- Plant is adaptable, but better growing conditions mean better flavor
- Plant root segments vertically or at a 45° angle in spring or fall
- Harvest a portion of the rhizomes in fall after frost kills the leaves
 - Dig roots, process main roots and replant offshoots
 - ◉ Spring planted may not be ready for fall harvest
 - ◉ Older roots are woody and not as tasty
- Prepare in an area with good ventilation
 - Wear gloves and eye protection when preparing



Try Different Planting Techniques

• Space Saving Techniques

Wide Row

- Vegetables are planted close together with just enough space for plants to reach full size
- Make sure you can access all plants from surrounding pathways or borders

Interplanting

- Quick maturing (short season) vegetables planted between vegetables like cabbage, peppers and tomatoes that take longer to reach full size (long season)
- By the time the long season vegetable needs the space, the short season vegetable is ready to harvest - two crops from one row

Succession or Relay Planting

- Plant a cool season vegetable in a space, once it is harvested plant another crop in its place. If time allows, plant a third vegetable - two or three crops from one row. Use frost dates and dates to harvest for planning.

Vertical Growing

- Train tomatoes, melons, pole beans and other vine crops up supports
 - Saves space, reduces disease due to better light penetration and air flow
 - Support heavy fruit with a sling tied to the support

Companion Planting

- Plants that attract pollinators and beneficial insects
- Trap plants
- Three Sisters
 - First Nation's planting technique
 - Plant corn first
 - When corn is at least 6" tall, plant pole beans next to it
 - The corn supports the pole beans and beans fix nitrogen to feed the corn and squash
 - Plant squash nearby to mulch the soil - conserving moisture and suppressing weeds

Cover Crops

- Vacant and future gardens
- Plant and till or mow and use as ground cover
- In late summer or fall for next season
- Spring planting
 - Sacrifice planting space that year
 - Early spring, till in cover crop and plant the same season
- Select a carefully as some perennial cover crops like clover can be hard to kill

Keep Gardening Fall into Winter

- Frost and FREEZE WATCHES AND WARNINGS
- Frost protection applied late afternoon and removed the following morning or once the frost has passed
 - Floating row covers allow air, light and water through
 - ◉ Cover plants and leave in place except to harvest or when you call it quits

High Tunnels to Keep Gardening Even in Colder Weather

- Structures support plastic cover and capture solar heat
 - Monitor temperatures and vent as needed
- Depending on where you garden and what you grow - may be able to extend the season by several months or grow cool season crops all winter long

Record Successes and Failures to Help with Future Gardens





UPCOMING APPEARANCES & WEBINARS

Check often as more appearances and webinars continue to be added.

March 15th Webinar

How to Select Rain Garden Plants

March 16th Webinar

Gardening to Attract Birds

March 18th & 19th

*Lansing Home & Garden Show
More Information*

March 24th Webinar

All About Houseplants

March 26th & 27th

*REALTORS Home & Garden Show
More Information*

March 31st Webinar

Growing Nutritious Herbs & Vegetables in a Garden or Container

April 2nd

*Siouxland Garden Show
More Information*

April 5th Webinar

Managing Water on Your Property

April 7th Webinar

Fragrant Plants Sure to Elevate Your Mood and Garden Enjoyment

April 9th

*Grand Forks County Extension's Gardening Saturday
More Information*

April 12th

*Elm Grove Beautification Committee
More Information*

April 14th Webinar

Jump Start Your Season and Protect Your Plants

April 27th Webinar

Organic Pest Management for Vegetable and Flower Gardens

April 30th

*Connecting with Nature for Your Well-being
More Information*

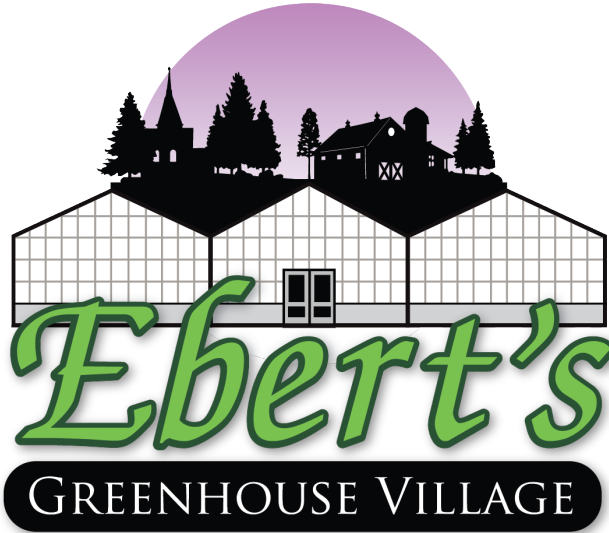
May 4th Webinar

Food Gardening in Containers

May 12th Webinar

How to Plant a Rain Garden

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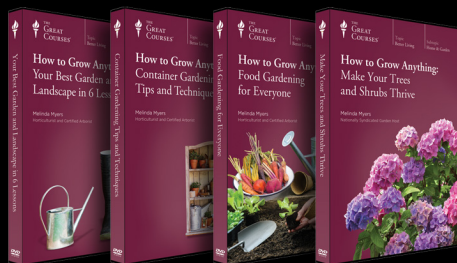
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MONTHLY GARDENING CHECKLISTS & MORE

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