

ALL ABOUT HOUSEPLANTS



melindamyers.com



BASIC CARE FOR INDOOR PLANTS

Select the right plant for the growing conditions
Match the plant's needs (water, fertilizer, grooming) to your gardening style

For pet-friendly houseplants, visit aspc.org

- **Pet Friendly Indoor Gardening**

For child-friendly houseplants, consult your pediatrician and Children's Hospitals' websites

- **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia**
- **University of North Carolina**

Display safely

CONSIDER LIGHT

- **Best Windows for Growing Indoor Plants**
- An east or west-facing window usually provides adequate light for most plants
 - High light plants within two feet of an east or west-facing window
 - South-facing in winter
- North-facing window or up to six feet back or off to the side of an east or west-facing window for low light plants
- Rotate plants growing in lower light to higher light every few weeks
- Turn regularly for more even growth
- Use artificial lights to expand options and increase success
 - **Selecting Artificial Lights for Indoor Gardens**
- Remember shears, awnings and trees can impact the light reaching the plants

- High shelf, hanging basket, out of reach (challenging for cats that leap and kids that climb)
- **Prevent Cats from Digging in Houseplants**
- Chunk or marble mulch, aluminum foil mulch, scat mats
- Webinar: Kid & Pet Friendly Houseplants
 - **Watch Now** - enter password **sjw6Aay%**
 - **Download Handout**

- Each home is different, so adjust plant locations as needed

- ***MUST HAVE HIGH LIGHT***

- Cacti and Succulents
- Most flowering plants
- **Norfolk Island Pine**
- **Croton**
- Sago Palm

- ***TOLERATE LOW LIGHT***

- **Philodendron**
- **Pothos**
- **Chinese Evergreen**
- **Cast Iron Plant**
- **Snake Plant**
- **ZZ Plant**
- **Parlor Palm**
- **Low Light Houseplants**

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



MOISTURE

- Watering Tips for Houseplant Care
- Water thoroughly and pour off excess that collects in the saucer
 - Tepid water is best
 - Allow top few inches of soil to dry for cacti and succulents
 - Or check the bottom drainage hole
 - Water moisture lovers when top few inches of soil is barely moist
 - Use pots with drainage holes
 - Double pot if this is not possible
 - Don't allow plants to sit in excess water
- Rewetting overly dry soil
 - Water from above, then set bottom of pot in sink or saucer of water
 - Or water and wait a few minutes and water again
 - Reviving Drought Stressed Houseplants
- Tips for those that overwater
 - Use clay pots that breath, allowing soil to dry out more quickly
 - Select a quality potting mix that drains well
 - Grow moisture loving plants
 - Papyrus
 - Spike Moss
 - Peace Lily
 - Baby Tears
 - Ferns
 - Houseplants That Tolerate Moist to Wet Soil
- Tips for those that tend to underwater
 - Plastic or glazed pots that hold moisture
 - Supplemental watering devices
 - DIY Self-Watering Systems for Houseplants
 - Hydroponics and self watering pots

- Grow drought tolerant plants
 - Cacti & Succulents
 - Pony Tail
 - ZZ Plant
 - Cast Iron Plant
 - Snake Plant

HUMIDITY FOR TROPICAL PLANTS

- Most tropical plants prefer 75-80%, our homes offer half of that
- Cooler temperatures in winter boost humidity
- Group plants together - as one transpires the others benefit
- Grave trays - saucer or shallow container with pebbles
 - Excess water collects below pot and evaporates around plants
- Terrariums and Wardian Cases
 - Closed for moisture and humidity loving plants
 - Open for cacti and succulents
 - Build a Tropical Paradise or Dramatic Desert In a Terrarium

TEMPERATURE

- Most plants tolerate room temperature (65-75° F), even a bit cooler than we like
 - Don't trap plants between curtain and window
 - May need to move plants back a bit from drafty window in winter
 - Chill damage - dark, slimy water soaked patches on stems and veins
- Higher the temperatures, the lower the humidity
- Avoid drafts of hot and cold air
 - Furnace and air conditioner vents



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

- Cacti and succulents like it cooler, soil drier and tolerate lower humidity in winter
- Avoid Cold Damage to Indoor Plants

FERTILIZER

- Fertilizing Houseplants
- Most newly purchased plants are set for several months
- Let your plants be the guide
- Only fertilize actively growing plants (March - November)
- Dilute solution of fertilizer labeled for indoor plants
 - Err on conservative side - you can always add more
 - Slow release/organic forms release small amounts of nutrients over time

TRANSPLANTING

- Transplant Potbound Houseplants
- Most plants only need transplanting once every few years
- Late winter before active growth is best time to transplant
- Dealing with settled soil
 - Lift plant, add new potting mix at bottom of pot
- Signs your plant needs a bigger pot
 - Water quickly runs out the drainage holes when watered
 - New growth is stunted
 - Roots fill the pot and encircle the root ball
- Only move into a pot one size larger
 - Oversized pots hold moisture and can lead to root rot
- Adjust watering cycle after repotting

- Root Prune Instead of Moving Indoor Houseplants to a Larger Pot

SUMMER PLANTS OUTDOORS

- Houseplants Move Into the Garden for the Summer
- Wait until night temperatures are in the high 40's to low 50's
- Moving Plants Outdoors
 - Acclimate plants when moving out and back indoors in fall
 - Consider risk of bringing insects back indoors in fall
 - Quarantine and monitor for pests
 - Nylon stocking over pot trick
- Vacation care
 - Vacation Care for Houseplants
 - Plant sitter
 - Self watering pots
 - DIY wicking systems
 - DIY Self-Watering Systems for Houseplants
 - Set in sink/tub with an inch of water, elevate pots above water, cover with clear plastic - placed in bright indirect light

WINTER CARE

- Houseplants Move in for the Winter
- Helping Winter Stressed Houseplants
- Winter Care for Cacti and Succulents
- Plant stands and more



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STARTING NEW PLANTS

- Expand your plant collection by starting new plants from your heirloom plant collection
 - Leaf Stem Cuttings
 - Cane Cuttings
 - Air Layering
 - Division

A FEW TO TRY

LOW TO MODERATE LIGHT

- Able to read without too much strain
- Back from or to the side of an east- or west-facing window
- In front of a north window

PHILODENDRON - *Philodendron* spp.

- Easy Care Philodendron
- Trailing, climbing, upright forms
- Water when top few inches of soil starts to dry
 - Do not overwater
- Avoid cool temperatures and drafts
- Color fades or disappears when light is insufficient
- Increase fullness of thin, leggy plants
 - Pinch out growing tip to encourage branching
 - Prune long, leggy stems
 - Root cuttings to start new plants
 - Add rooted cuttings to container
- Lots of varieties
 - Heartleaf Philodendron (*P. hederaceum*)
 - Brasil - narrow, creamy green stripe down middle of leaves
 - Neon - bright chartreuse leaves
 - *Philodendron* 'Autumn' - upright, 2-3'
 - *Philodendron* x 'Hope' - non-vining
 - *Philodendron gloriosum* - large velvety leaves
 - Split Leaf (*Philodendron bipinnatifidum*)

- Shangri-La - dwarf split leaf
- Toxic to humans, cats and dogs
 - Calcium oxalate crystals

MONSTERA - *Monstera deliciosa*

- Often misidentified as a philodendron
- In native habitat, forms large edible fruits, thus the *deliciosa*
- Climber - aerial roots attach to rough support
- Light - prefers a bit more light than philodendron
- Warm location
- Allow top inch or two of soil to dry before watering
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - leaves contain raphides (water insoluble calcium oxalate) and unverified proteinaceous toxins
 - Causes burning of lips, tongue and mouth
- Spadix and fruit are edible

POTHOS

(*Epipremnum aureum* formerly *Pothos aureus*)

- **Pothos Audio Tip**

- Water when top few inches of soil starting to dry
 - Do not overwater
- Prefers 60° to 80°
- Loses variegation - too little light
- See philodendron for tips on improving appearance
- *Epipremnum aureum* 'Marble Queen'
- *Epipremnum aureum* 'Pearls and Jade'
- Toxic to humans, cats and dogs
 - Calcium oxalate crystals

ZZ PLANT - *Zamioculcas zamifolia*

- **Great low light plant**
- Allow soil to dry before watering thoroughly
- Avoid cold drafts
- Fleshy rhizomes hold water - start new plants from divisions
- Varieties:
 - 'Raven' - black leaves
 - 'Zenzi' - curled leaves toward tips
 - 'Zamicro' - dwarf
- All parts are poisonous
 - Toxic to cats and dogs
 - Human toxicity - leaves contain calcium oxalate
 - Causes diarrhea and vomiting

PEACE LILY - *Spathiphyllum*

- Moist soil a must
 - **Wilted and Yellow Leaves on Peace Lilies**
 - Include **Wild Valley Wool Pellets** in potting mix to reduce watering by up to 25%
 - Adds porosity, so great for all plants
 - Variegated peace lily (*Spathiphyllum* 'Domino')
- Sensitive to fluoride and chlorine in water
- Toxic to cats and dogs

CHINESE EVERGREEN - *Aglaonema commutatum*

- Do not overwater
- Prefers temperatures between 65° to 75°
- Tolerates low humidity better than many other houseplants
- **Easy Care Chinese Evergreen**
- Colorful varieties now more available:
 - Red Siam - red edges on broad leaves
 - Red Valentine - green leaves with pink and red blotches
 - Silver Bay - green leaves with silver centers
 - Spilt Milk - white markings on green leaves
- Toxic to humans, cats and dogs

CAST IRON PLANT - *Aspidistra eliator*

- Used as a shade tolerant ground cover in the south
- Tolerates very low light and humidity
- Allow soil to dry between watering, especially in winter
- Variegated varieties available:
 - Speckled Cast Iron Plant (*Aspidistra eliator* 'Milky Way')
- **Low Maintenance, Hard to Kill Cast Iron Plant**
- Non-toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - non listed in either reference

PARLOR PALM - *Chamaedorea elegans*

- **Growing Parlor Palms Indoors**
- Prefers humidity, but tolerates normal home conditions
- Relatively slow growing
- Trimming or air layering tall plants
 - **Trimming Tall Palm**
- Sensitive to fluoride and chlorine in water
- Non-toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity for *Chamaedorea elegans* - non listed
 - Human toxicity for *Chamaedorea seifrizii* - fruit has oxalic acid
 - Causes irritation to skin when handled

SPIDER PLANT - *Chlorophytum comosum*

- Bright, indirect light preferred
 - Green variety more tolerant of low light
 - Less variegation in lower light
- Slightly moist soil, but well-drained
- Avoid cold drafts
- **Brown tips from fluoride and chlorine in water**
- Propagate by division or offsets
- Variegatum - leaves edged in white
- Picturatum - leaves have central yellow stripe
- Milky Way - cream leaves edged in green
- Non-toxic to humans, cats and dogs

NERVE PLANT - *Fittonia*

- Green, pink, purple, red, variegated, white
- Moist, well-drained, not soggy soil
- High humidity
- Can be short lived, so regularly take cuttings to start new plants
- You will see the white and red veined plants listed as either:
 - *Fittonia verschaffeltii*
 - *Fittonia albivenis*
- Non-toxic to humans, cats and dogs

ANTHURIUM - *Anthurium scherzerianum*

- These are epiphytes, like most of our orchids
- Grow in a brightly lit location for best flowering
- Will tolerate low light
- Water often enough to prevent roots from drying - don't let plants wilt
- Long blooming - the colorful heart shaped parts we call flowers are actually modified leaves
- These plants need minimal fertilization
- **Anthuriums for Valentine's Day and Indoor Gardens**
- Varieties include flowers of white, red, pink, violet, green and now orange (Sierra Orange)
 - *Anthurium andraeanum* 'Anthzupap'
- Toxic to cats and dogs

- Human toxicity - all parts contain raphides of water insoluble calcium oxalate crystals and unverified proteinaceous toxins
 - Causes oral irritation and swelling

BRIGHT, INDIRECT LIGHT

- Plants in NE or NW window
 - Some direct light in the morning or afternoon
 - Bright the rest of the day

PEPEROMIA - *Peperomia*

- Upright and trailing types
- Green "rat tail" flowers
- Tropical plants prefer humid conditions during active growth
- Avoid cold drafts
- Some species with thick succulent leaves are more drought tolerant
- Water when top inch of soil is dry
 - Allow top few inches of soil to dry for thicker leafed varieties
- Prefers bright, indirect light, but will tolerate lower light
 - Less variegation and smaller leaves in low light
- Winter temperatures 60° and above
 - Soil a bit drier
- Generally slow growing, so minimal fertilizer and pruning needed
- **Oedema** (edema) may be a problem
- Blunt Leaf Peperomia (*P. obtusifolia*)
 - Hardy Zones 10b to 12a
 - Thick green or variegated leaves
- **Ripple Peperomia** (*P. caperata* 'Ripple')
 - Hardy Zones 9b to 11a
 - Textured leaves
- Watermelon Peperomia (*P. argyreia*)
 - Smooth leaves colored like watermelon rind
- Listed as non-toxic to cats and dogs
 - Double check for species you select
- Human toxicity
 - *P. obtusifolia* only one found listed as moderately toxic to people and some animals, although ASPCA lists it as non-toxic

DIEFFENBACHIA - *Dieffenbachia*

- Even light - rotate for balanced growth
- High humidity
- Moist soil
- Older plants tend to lose lower leaves
 - Prune back and remaining stem will sprout
 - **Air layering**
 - **Cane cuttings**
 - Pinch growing tip to encourage new growth lower on the plant
- Toxic to humans, cats and dogs
 - Calcium oxalate crystals
 - Oxalic acid and more that irritate, numb vocal cords (up to 2 weeks)
 - Dermatitis
 - Can be fatal to pets

DRACAENA - *Dracaena* spp.

- Some species and cultivars tolerate lower light
- Bright light promotes better color in leaves
- Sensitive to chlorine and fluoride in water
- Varieties:
 - **Corn Plant** (*D. fragrans*)
 - **Blooming Corn Plant**
 - Tricolor or Dragon Tree (*D. marginata*)
 - Tricolor
 - Colorama
 - Bicolor
 - ◆ Long narrow leaves with variegation
 - *Dracaena deremensis*
 - Dorado - wide leaves with thin yellow margin
 - Ulises - green leaves with white stripes down the middle
 - Lemon Lime - green leaves with white stripes down the middle and chartreuse leaf margins
 - White Jewel - dark green leaves with wide white stripes
 - Limelight - neon bright, wide chartreuse leaves
 - **Lucky Bamboo** (*D. sanderiana*)
 - Often grown hydroponically - can be grown in soil
 - Keep container filled with water

- Change water if it becomes cloudy
- Add dilute solution of liquid fertilizer if plant needs nutrient boost
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Non-toxic to humans

AFRICAN VIOLET - *Streptocarpus* formerly *Saintpaulia*

- Hardy in Zones 118b to 12b
- Bright east-facing window or under artificial lights
- African violet or other well-drained potting mix with organic matter
- Fertilize actively growing plants with flowering plant fertilizer
- Keep cold water off the leaves
- Leach salts out as needed
- **Encourage flowering**
- Propagate new plants from **leaf-petiole cutting**
- Long bare stems can be buried
- Related species
 - Flame Violet (*Episcia cupreata*)
 - Colorful leaves
 - Yellow, orange, red flowers
- Both species are non-toxic to humans, cats and dogs

BROMELIADS - Various Genera

- Epiphyte grown in a well-drained potting mix or grown as an air plant
- Those with soft, pliable leaves are more tolerant of low light
- Place those with thicker leaves in brighter light
- Long blooming, providing months of colorful flowers
- Water often enough to prevent roots from drying
 - Tank types
 - Keep leaf cup full of water and refresh regularly
 - Those growing in soil
 - Water thoroughly and often enough to prevent roots from drying
- Boost humidity
 - Group plants
 - Gravel tray
- Post flowering
 - Parent plant dies
 - Offsets form
- **Reblooming**
 - Place mature plant in plastic bag with a slice of apple for 3 days
 - Remove and wait for flowers to form
- *Guzmania* spp.
- *Aechmea* spp.
- *Aechmea fasciata*
- Grecian Urn (*Quesnelia marmorata*)
- **Air Plant** (*Tillandsia*)
 - Soak in tepid water every week or two
 - More often in low humidity
- Blushing Bromeliad (*Neoregalia* spp.)
- Check toxicity of species growing

MOTH ORCHIDS - *Phalaenopsis* spp.

- Epiphyte, usually grown in orchid mix
- Long blooming plants that can flower for months
- Moth orchids are easiest as they are most adaptable to household environments
- Grow flowering plants in bright light
- **Water thoroughly**
 - Usually once a week depending on indoor growing conditions
 - Skip the ice cube, use tepid water for best results
- Prefer high humidity
- **Reblooming** - several options:
 - Leave flower stem intact - you may get a second, smaller flush of flowers
 - Cut the stem back to the 2nd or 3rd node and a new flower stem should emerge
 - Cut the flower stem back to leaves
 - It can take a year for new flowers to form, but it is the best option for the plant
- Non-toxic to cats, dogs and humans

BRIGHT LIGHT

- Plants near an east- or west-facing window
- 2-4 hours of direct sun
- No direct midday sun
- Back from south-facing window
 - Except winter in the north

SNAKE PLANT

Dracaena trifasciata, formerly *Sansevieria*

- Snake Plant Audio Tip
- Hardy Zones 10b to 12a
- Prefers bright light and will flower in brighter locations
- Will tolerate low light
 - Can get floppy
- Dry soil
- Propagate by leaf cuttings and division
 - Variegation not continued in leaf cuttings
- Varieties:
 - Black Gold - dark green leaves with yellow edges
 - Moonshine - wide leaves, lighter green, especially in brighter light
 - *Dracaena aubrytiana* - wide leaves with unique variegation
 - *Dracaena angolensis* - spear-like leaves
- Toxic to cats and dogs
- Human toxicity - saponins

TI PLANT - *Cordyline terminalis*

- Leaves red, pink, and green streaks
- Older plants may form a spike of fragrant small pink/purple flowers followed by red berries
- Water thoroughly when top few inches of soil are dry
- Avoid cold and drafty locations
- Sensitive to chlorine and fluoride in water
- Tends to drop lower leaves
 - See dieffenbachia
- Toxic to humans, cats and dogs
 - Saponins

CROTON - *Codiaeum variegatum*

- Growing Croton
- Hardy in Zones 11 to 12
- Leaves narrow, oval, wavy, twisted or lobed in various color combinations of green, orange, pink, purple, red, silver, variegated, white, yellow
- Leaves lose colorful variegation in low light
- Sprouts with green leaves may appear
- Moist, well-drained soil
 - Water thoroughly when top 1/2" of soil is dry
- Suffers leaf drop when soil is too wet, too dry, exposed to drafts or temperatures below 50°
- Milky sap (*Euphorbiaceae* family) can cause dermatitis
- Poisonous to humans if eaten in large quantities
 - Diterpene esters
 - Cause mild oral and gastrointestinal irritation and dermatitis
- Toxic to cats and dogs

SUCCULENTS

The colors and shapes of these easy care plants make it easy to add color throughout your home

- Water thoroughly when soil is dry
 - Some gardeners check moisture at drainage holes
- Cooler temperatures and a bit drier soil in winter
- Echeveria
- Sempervivum
- Sedums
- Many, many more
- Check toxicity of species selected
- Centerpiece
- Wreath
- Tree
- Cocktail Glass

KALANCHOE - *Kalanchoe*

- Grow flowering kalanchoes in a cool, bright location
 - Cooler temperatures at night
- Water thoroughly when the top inch of soil is just starting to feel dry
- Remove faded flowers for second flush of blooms
- Grow like other succulents when it is not flowering
 - Place in a sunny window and allow the top inch of soil to dry thoroughly before watering thoroughly
- Rebloom your kalanchoe like Christmas cactus
 - Stop providing the dark period when the buds are fully developed
- Many varieties available with colorful or velvety leaves
- Toxic to humans, cats, and dogs

WAX PLANT - *Hoya carnosa*

- Green or variegated flat or curled leaves
- White, waxy, sweetly fragrant flowers
 - Potbound plants
 - Flowers form on long, bare stems
 - Repeat bloom on same stem
 - Avoid over fertilization that can impede flowering
- Water regularly when actively growing
- Warmer temperatures and high humidity in spring and summer
- Cooler temperatures and drier soils in winter
- Non-toxic to cats, dogs and humans

BIRD OF PARADISE - *Strelitzia reginae*

- Hardy Zones 10b to 12a
- Slow growing when young
- Cooler temperatures in winter
 - Soil slightly drier
 - Overwatering leads to root rot
- Flowers royal blue, orange and yellow
 - Flowers best when potbound
 - Long lasting
 - Excellent cut flowers
 - Mature plants (2-4 years) may flower intermittently year round
- Pollinated by birds
 - When birds sip nectar the petals open to cover their feet with pollen
- Toxic to humans, cats and dogs
 - GI irritants





UPCOMING APPEARANCES & WEBINARS

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

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

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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](#)



Revised and Updated Edition

Midwest Gardener's Handbook

All You Need to Know to Plan, Plant & Maintain a Midwestern Garden

Melinda Myers



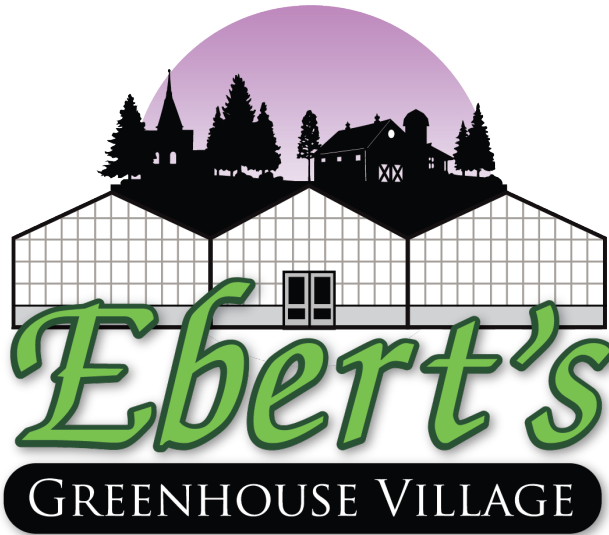
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- Month-by-month region-specific plant care advice
- Includes flowers, vines, vegetables, shrubs, trees, bulbs & more

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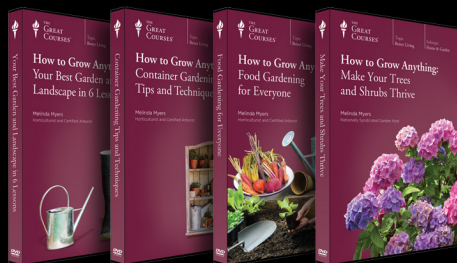
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