



# GARDENING FOR BEGINNERS

Northern Colorado is a great place to start your journey as a gardener. With our sunny and dry climate, you can grow a variety of plants, vegetables and fruits.

## IF YOU'RE NEW TO GARDENING, HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON HOW TO GET STARTED

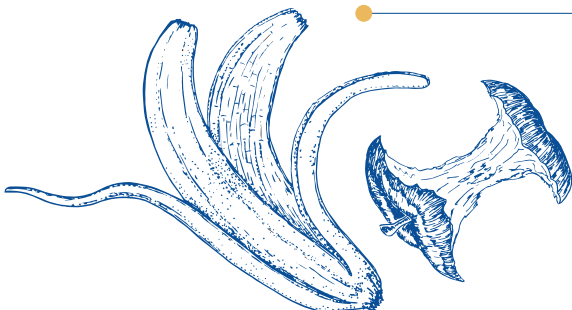


### DETERMINE YOUR GARDEN'S LOCATION & SIZE

The first thing you need to decide is where you want to have your garden and how big it should be. Choose a location that receives a minimum of six hours of sunlight daily and has easy access to water. Consider the size of your garden based on the number of plants you want to grow and the available space.

### PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SOIL

Northern Colorado has high alkaline soil with a pH between 7.5 to 8.5. Because of this, it's essential to amend the soil to provide the right nutrients to your plants. You can add organic matter like compost, manure and peat moss to improve the soil structure.



### ADD COMPOST FOR NUTRIENTS

Not only does it cut down on your overall waste, composting also provides great nutrients for your soil. Composting encourages the production of beneficial bacterial and fungi that break down organic matter to create humus, a rich nutrient-filled material that improves the overall texture of your soil, enabling it to retain and drain water better, enhancing your garden's ability to grow healthy plants.

# WHEN IT'S TIME TO PLANT

## PICK THE RIGHT PLANTS

It's vital to choose plants that are well-suited to the Northern Colorado climate. Select plants that can tolerate hot summers and cold winters. Some good options for this region include tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, zucchini, pumpkins and melons.

### HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER



#### Consider Companion Planting

When plants have good companions, they will thrive in your garden. Inside each plant community, certain plants can compete with one another for nutrients or sunlight. But when paired correctly, companion planting can help reduce pests, promote better overall growth, attract beneficial bugs, provide shade, improve soil health and fertility, and suppress weed growth. For instance:

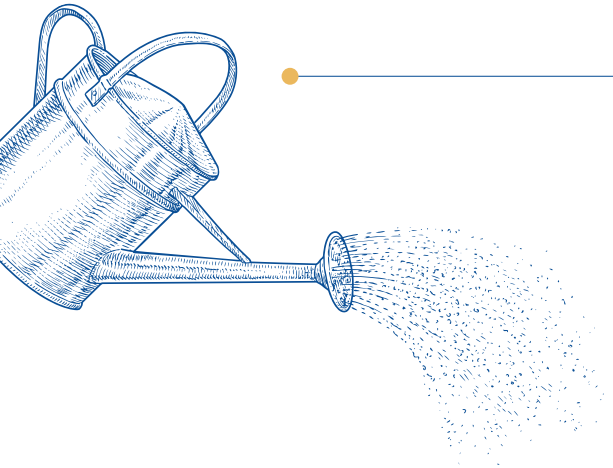
- Basil repels certain insect pests such as thrips and has also been known to disorient the moths that lay tomato hornworms.
- Garlic and garlic spray will add a scent that deters many insects including aphids, onion flies, ermine moths and Japanese Beetles.
- Mint keeps away aphids, ants and flea beetles.
- Parsley attracts beneficial insects that will protect and pollinate tomato plants.
- Sage repels carrot flies and can enhance strawberry flavor.
- Sunflowers provide structure for climbing plants and shade for low-growing crops.



#### Here are some popular companion planting combinations:

- Basil + Tomatoes
- Garlic + Potatoes, Lettuce, Fruit Trees
- Parsley + Tomatoes
- Sage + Cabbage
- Sunflowers + Cucumbers, Pole Beans

# CARING FOR YOUR GARDEN

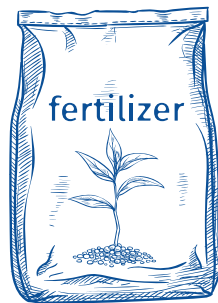


## Determine Your Watering Schedule

Watering is crucial for plant growth, but it's important not to overwater. Determine your watering schedule based on the needs of your plants, the type of soil and the climate. Northern Colorado has low humidity, so you may need to water more frequently. Consider using drip irrigation or soaker hoses to conserve water while also paying attention to the time of day that you're doing most of your watering. During hot summer days, early morning and late evening watering will mitigate evaporation and ensure your water gets to where you want it to go.

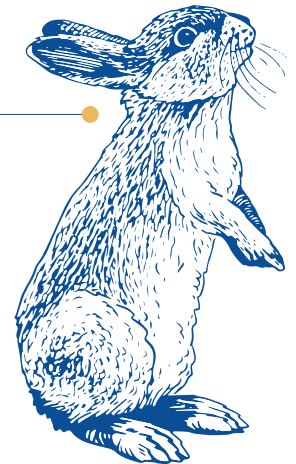
## Fertilize Your Plants

Plants need nutrients to grow, which you can provide with the right type of fertilizer. Choose a balanced fertilizer that contains nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Or use an organic fertilizer like fish emulsion, compost tea or bone meal.



## Protect Your Garden from Pests

Pests like rabbits, deer and squirrels can damage your garden. Consider using physical barriers like fences or netting to keep them out. You can also use natural pest control methods like companion planting, planting herbs that repel pests and using organic pesticides.



## Mitigate the Weeds

Weeding your garden isn't just about maintaining its aesthetic – weeds steal the space, water and sunlight you carefully planned for your plants. Here are some tips:

- **Use the right tool.** Hoes with triangular blades are good for closely spaced rows and underneath plants, a garden knife or dandelion digger is good for weed with longer roots, and a garden fork or a trowel is good for making quick work of baby weeds.
- **Pull weeds after it rains or after you've watered** – when the soil is moist – because it will be easier to pull the weed with its roots intact. This will also help you not disturb the soil too much, which gives any fallen seeds from the pulled weeds a chance at exposure to the sun and an opportunity to germinate.
- **Cleaning up as you go or when you're done is important.** Roots that are left behind may still be alive and can grow again.