

The 10-Minute Garden Start

Find your zone, pick one pot and begin small.



FIND WHAT YOU NEED

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START YOUR GARDEN START AND THE METHOD

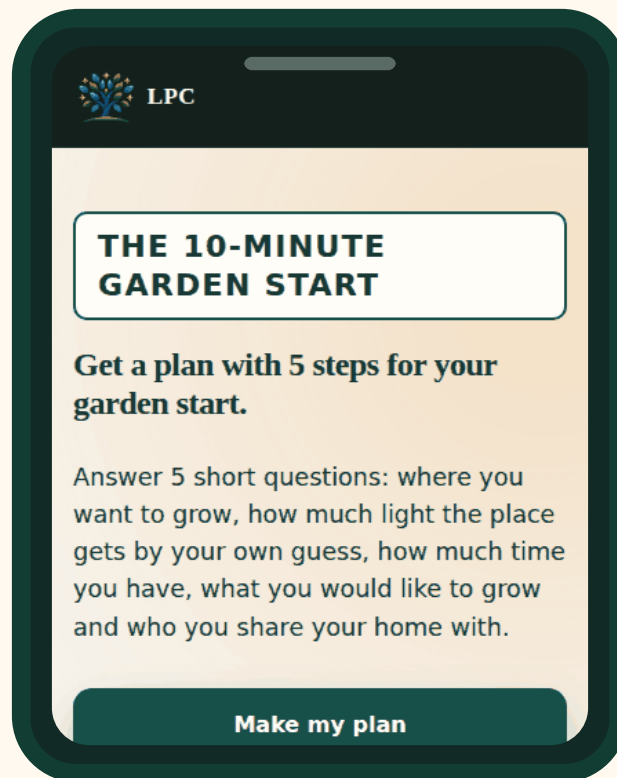
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Quick Route: Start with the Garden Start Companion App



If you would like to grow something but do not know where to begin, the Garden Start Companion App can help you start now.

You answer 5 questions, and the app gives you a plan with 5 steps: find your zone, choose a place,

CONTINUED

choose a pot, write what you plant and set a day to look again.

Save favorites and add personal notes, so your app is tailored to your preferences.

You can create 2 complete personalized plans free.

Read the Important Note About Gardening and Safety first. Then use the app for a plan, or keep reading and learn the method at your own pace.

Open the Garden Start Companion App

<https://gardenstart.lifeperksclub.com>

A GENTLE NOTE

Important Note About Gardening and Safety



This guide gives everyday ideas for finding your hardiness zone, choosing one place, choosing one pot and setting a day to look again. It is general information. It is not gardening, health, safety or environmental advice.

CONTINUED

It does not tell you what to plant, how to look after a plant, or what to do about soil, water, feed, pests or chemicals. It does not promise that anything will grow or survive. It names no plants, no brands and no prices.

The 10-minute frame, the 4 parts, the order of steps, the one place, the one pot and the one check day are this guide's own ideas. They are a way to make a small start. They do not come from an official source.

The guide leans on one U.S. government page: the Plant Hardiness Zone Map from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the USDA. Whenever the guide says what that page says, it says "according to the USDA".

CONTINUED

Everything else is the guide's own suggestion, and it says so.

For anything about a particular plant or product, the label on the plant, the seed packet or the product is the place to look. A local garden center can also answer questions. If you are not sure, write "ask" next to it.

This guide and the companion app never ask you for a ZIP code, an address, a card number, an account number, a Social Security number or a password. Please do not type those into either one, and do not write them in your notes.

You never have to do a step that feels like too much. If a step does not fit your day, skip it and go on to another one.

START HERE

Why a Garden Start Gets Put Off



Most people who want to grow something do not decide to put it off. The idea simply stays an idea. It sounds good in March and still sounds good in June.

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There are many small questions inside it. Where could it go? What would I put it in? What can live where I live? Each question is easy. Together they feel like a whole project.

Nothing asks you to answer them. A garden has no deadline on your calendar. A bill gets paid and a pet gets fed, but a pot that does not exist yet does not ask for anything.

There is also a quiet fear of doing it wrong. People worry that they will pick the wrong spot or the wrong container and waste the effort. So they wait until they know more, and the wait gets longer.

And the information can feel big. A search for "how to start a garden" can bring up pages of advice, and a lot of it may be about things you do not need yet.

CONTINUED

That is why "I should start a garden" can stay on a mind for years. Nobody did anything wrong. The week was busy, and the idea had no first step.

This guide does not turn you into a gardener. It does something smaller. It shows you how to find your zone, choose one place, choose one pot and pick one day to look again.

You do not need tools or experience. You need a pen or your phone, a look at the space you have and about 10 minutes.

The 10 minutes are a starting frame, not a promise that you will be finished in 10 minutes. It means one short sitting is enough to know what comes next.

THE 4 PARTS OF A GARDEN

The 4 Parts of a Garden Start



A garden start can feel like a lot. This guide splits it into 4 parts so you look at less at a time. The split is the guide's own idea. It is not an official list.

Find your zone. One look at the USDA map to see which hardiness zone your area is in. According to

CONTINUED

the USDA, you find it by typing your ZIP code into the search field on the USDA page.

One place. Choose one spot for your start. It can be a garden, a balcony, a windowsill or a spot indoors. The spot is your choice.

One pot. Choose one pot. Only one. This guide does not cover digging or beds.

CONTINUED

The check day. One date on which you look again. The date is the guide's own idea.

If something does not fit, put it with the part that feels closest. The parts are only there to help you look at less at a time.

You do not have to do all 4 parts on the same day. A small start with one part is a complete start.

THE METHOD

Your 10-Minute Garden Start Task Dump



A task dump means writing down everything that comes to mind, without sorting it. Set a timer for 10 minutes. This frame is the guide's own.

Take a piece of paper or open the notes on your phone. Write one line for each thing. Do not put

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them in order. Do not worry about whether it is big or small.

Write down what you know and what you do not know. Where could I grow something? Do I have a pot? Do I know my zone? What would I like to grow, and do I know what it needs?

You can also write down the small things you keep meaning to do. A line that says "look at the windowsill" is a complete line.

Your list may look like this: find my zone, walk around the balcony, look for a pot I already have, think of one thing I would enjoy growing and pick a day. These are only examples. Your list will be different.

CONTINUED

Next to each line you may write which of the 4 parts it belongs to: zone, place, pot or check day.

If a line is a question, put a question mark at the end. A page with 5 question marks is a good first page. It tells you exactly what to look at.

When the timer rings, stop. You do not have to finish the list. A half list is better than a list in your head.

Keep the page. The next sections tell you how to use it.

THE METHOD

The 10-Minute Garden Start: Order of Steps



ONE ZONE - ONE PLACE - ONE POT - 10 MINUTES

Here is the order this guide suggests. It is the guide's own order. It is not from an official source, and you can change it to fit your day.

CONTINUED

1. **Find your zone.** Look up your hardiness zone on the USDA map and write the number and letter.
2. **Choose a place.** One spot you can reach easily.
3. **Choose a pot.** One pot that you already have or can get.
4. **Write what you plant.** Write the name of the plant on your page, from its own label.
5. **Set a check day.** Choose the day to look again.

CONTINUED

You do not need to finish one step before you start the next. But if you are not sure where to start, start at the top.

Take one step today. A short start that you finish is better than a big one that you drop.

If you share your home with someone, show them the page when you are done. 2 people looking at the same page often find something that one of them forgot.

The next sections go through the steps one by one.

GARDEN START: FIND YOUR ZONE

Garden Start: Find Your Zone



Finding your zone is the first step. This section uses the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map page, and it adds a few small ideas of its own.

According to the USDA, you find your zone by typing your ZIP code into the search field on the

CONTINUED

map page or by clicking on your location on the map. Type the ZIP code only on the USDA page. This guide and the app never ask for it and never keep it.

According to the USDA, the map has 13 zones. Zone 1 is the coldest and zone 13 is the warmest.

Write the result on your page in one line, for example "my zone: ___". Use the number and letter exactly as the USDA page shows them.

CONTINUED

If you cannot find your location on the map, write "ask" and go on. The USDA page is the place to look, and you can come back to it another day.

If you do not know your ZIP code, a letter that came to your home will show it. Do not write anything else from the letter on your page.

Do not read the whole map page today. Find your zone, write it down and stop. You can read more on another day.

If the page does not open, write "zone later" and go on. The other steps do not need the number to begin.

GARDEN START

Garden Start: What a Zone Number Tells You



Once you have a zone, it helps to know what the number is. This section uses the USDA page, and it only covers what that page says.

According to the USDA, a zone is based on the average annual extreme minimum temperature in

CONTINUED

winter. That means the coldest temperature of the year, averaged over time.

According to the USDA, the map uses 30 years of weather data, from 1991 to 2020.

According to the USDA, each zone is 10 degrees Fahrenheit wide. Each zone is also divided into an "a" and a "b" half, and each half is 5 degrees Fahrenheit wide.

According to the USDA, the map is a general guide for perennial plants. Perennial plants are plants that come back year after year.

CONTINUED

So the zone number tells you one thing: how cold it usually gets in winter where you are, according to the USDA's data. Write that sentence on your page in your own words.

The guide does not tell you what the number means for a particular plant. The plant's own label is the place to look.

This is a small step. A page with a zone and one sentence is a good page.

GARDEN START

Garden Start: What a Zone Number Does Not Tell You



A zone number is useful, but it does not tell you everything. This section uses the USDA page, and it only covers what that page says.

According to the USDA, the map is a general guide, and past weather records cannot guarantee what

CONTINUED

the weather will do. So a zone number is not a promise that a plant will live.

According to the USDA, a rare, extreme cold spell that lasts only 1 or 2 days can kill plants that have done well for several years.

According to the USDA, other things matter too. The page names light, soil moisture, swings in temperature, how long the cold lasts, humidity, wind, soil type, snow and pollution.

The guide does not go into those. It only says that the USDA names them, so you know the number is not the whole story.

CONTINUED

According to the USDA, the map has a resolution of about half a mile. Very small local conditions, called microclimates, may not show on it.

According to the USDA, a change in a zone does not mean you have to remove plants that are doing well.

The map is about perennial plants. This guide does not say what the zone means for a plant in a pot, or for a plant that lives for one season. Write "ask" next to anything you are not sure about.

For anything about a plant, the plant's own label and a local garden center are the places to ask.

GARDEN START

Garden Start: Choosing One Place



The place is the second step. This section is the guide's own set of ideas. It does not use an official source, and it tells you nothing about what the place needs for a plant.

CONTINUED

Choose one place. Not 3. One place is enough for a first start.

It can be a garden, a balcony, a windowsill or a spot indoors. If you do not have any of them, a table near a window counts.

Walk to the place and look at it. Stand there for a minute. Write one line: where it is and what you can see.

Choose a place you pass every day or can see from where you sit. A place you see is a place you remember.

CONTINUED

Choose a place you can reach without moving anything heavy. Think about how you would carry a pot there.

If you share the space, tell the others that you are choosing it. A place that someone else needs may not work.

This guide does not say how much light a place needs or how much it gets. That depends on the plant, and the plant's own label is the place to look. Write your own guess on the page, such as "a little", "some" or "a lot".

If you cannot decide, write 2 choices and pick one on the check day.

GARDEN START

Garden Start: Choosing One Pot



The pot is the third step. This section is the guide's own set of ideas. It does not tell you what size or kind of pot a plant needs.

Choose one pot. Only one. This guide is about a small start, and one pot is a small start.

CONTINUED

Look first at what you already have. A pot in a cupboard, in the garage or in a shed may do. Write down where it is.

If you do not have one, write "need a pot" on your page. The guide does not name a brand or a shop and it does not say what a pot should cost.

Think about where the pot will stand and how you will carry it. Choose a pot that you can lift and move.

CONTINUED

The guide does not say what a pot needs to have, or what goes inside it. The label of the plant and a local garden center are the places to ask.

Write the pot and the place together on one line, for example "pot from the cupboard, windowsill in the kitchen". These are only examples.

If you have more than one pot, choose the one you like to look at. A pot you like is a pot you notice.

Do not buy anything today unless you want to. A start that costs nothing is still a start.

GARDEN START WITH KIDS, A

Garden Start With Kids, a Partner or Housemates



A garden start is easier when everyone knows what is happening. This section is the guide's own set of ideas, and it only covers small, practical things.

With children. Let them choose the pot or draw the place on the page. Ask them to help with

CONTINUED

something small. The plant's own label is the place to look for anything about handling.

With a partner. Share the page. One person finds the zone on the map and the other writes. Swap for the next step.

With housemates. Write the place on a sheet and say who looks at it on the check day. Write the name and the day.

With a parent. If you are helping a parent, sit down with them at the kitchen table. Write the 4

CONTINUED

parts on one page and let them choose the place and the pot.

Alone. Do the start at a time of day when you have energy. Do one step and stop when you want.

In every case, say the plan out loud before you start. Say how long it will take and who does what.

If someone does not want to take part, do not argue. Do your own part. Ask again another day.

STEP BY STEP

The Night Before Your Garden Start



The night before is easier when the things are close. This section is the guide's own plan. It only takes a few minutes.

Look at your calendar and choose a 10-minute slot for tomorrow. Write it down.

CONTINUED

Put a pen and a piece of paper, or your phone, where you will see them in the morning. If you have your task dump, put it with them.

Think about which place you will look at first. Write it at the top of your page, or write "ask" if you do not know yet.

If you know where a pot is, move it near the door or write where it is. You do not need to carry anything else.

CONTINUED

Find a clear spot on a table where you can put your page.

If you share your home, tell the others that you will try. A short message is enough.

You do not need to prepare more than this. A small start tonight makes tomorrow lighter.

STEP BY STEP

Garden Start Day: A One-Page Plan



A start is easier with a one-page plan. The plan is the guide's own. Write it on a single sheet and keep it where you can reach it.

At the top. Write the date and the time you will start and stop.

CONTINUED

Step 1: Find your zone (about 3 minutes). Open the USDA page, find your zone and write it down.

Step 2: Choose a place (about 2 minutes). One spot you can reach easily. Write it down.

Step 3: Choose a pot (about 2 minutes). One pot you have or need. Write where it is.

Step 4: Write what you plant (about 2 minutes). Write the name from the plant's own label, or write "not sure yet".

CONTINUED**Step 5: Set a check day (about 1 minute).**

Choose a day to look again. Put it in your calendar.

The times are only a rough guide. The frame is the guide's own.

At the bottom. Write 3 lines: what I did today, what I will ask and what I will do on the check day.

When the time is up, stop. Tell someone what you did, in one sentence. That is the end of the day.

If the plan does not fit on one page, you wrote too much. Cross out one line and keep the rest.

THE METHOD

After Your Garden Start: Your First 10 Minutes



When you finish the start, you do not have to be done with everything. This section gives you a short next step. The 10-minute frame is the guide's own.

CONTINUED

Look at your page. You may see a zone, a place, a pot and a few lines that say "ask".

Take the first 3 minutes to look at the lines that say "ask". Pick one. Write where you will look for the answer. For most of them, the answer is on the plant's label or at a local garden center.

Take the next 3 minutes to do one small thing. It may be putting the pot at the place or reading the USDA page again.

Take the next 2 minutes to put the page where you can find it next time. The kitchen, a folder or a photo on your phone all work.

CONTINUED

Take the last 2 minutes to write the check day in your calendar. Name it clearly: "Garden check".

Do not try to do all of it today. A short list that you come back to is better than a long list that you drop.

If you want one more small thing, say your zone out loud once. Hearing it helps it stick.

Then stop for the day.

GARDEN STARTS THAT GET

Garden Starts That Get Forgotten



Some things are easy to forget. This list is the guide's own set of reminders. It is not official, and some may not apply to you.

- The zone, which you looked up once and did not write down.

CONTINUED

- The pot in the cupboard, which you meant to use.
- The place by the window, which you have not looked at since.
- The label, which says more than you remember.
- The question you wrote "ask" next to.
- The note you wrote last time and cannot find.

CONTINUED

- The date for the next look.
- The person who said they would check.
- The USDA page, which has the map.

If you see something here that you have not looked at, do not feel bad. These are the ones that everyone forgets, because they do not make noise.

Pick one from the list. Add it to your page. Write it down and put a date next to it.

If you use the app, your answers to 5 short questions shape the plan.

WHERE TO START

When Your Garden Start Falls Apart



Plans change. A busy week arrives. The timer rings and you have only found your zone. This section is for those days. The ideas are the guide's own.

You ran out of time. Stop. Write down where you stopped. Do the rest in another 10 minutes.

CONTINUED

You could not find your zone. Write "zone later" and go on. You can come back to it.

You are not sure about a plant. Leave it as it is. Write "ask". The plant's label and a local garden center are the places to look.

You cannot decide on a place. Write 2 choices and pick one on the check day.

Someone else uses the space. Do not argue. Write their name on the page and ask them what they have noticed.

CONTINUED

The month went by. It happens. Write today's date and start again. You do not have to make up for it.

You do not feel like it. Do one thing: look at one spot and write one line. Then stop. A small start counts.

You do not have to do a perfect start. A short, calm sitting can help more than a perfect plan that you never use.

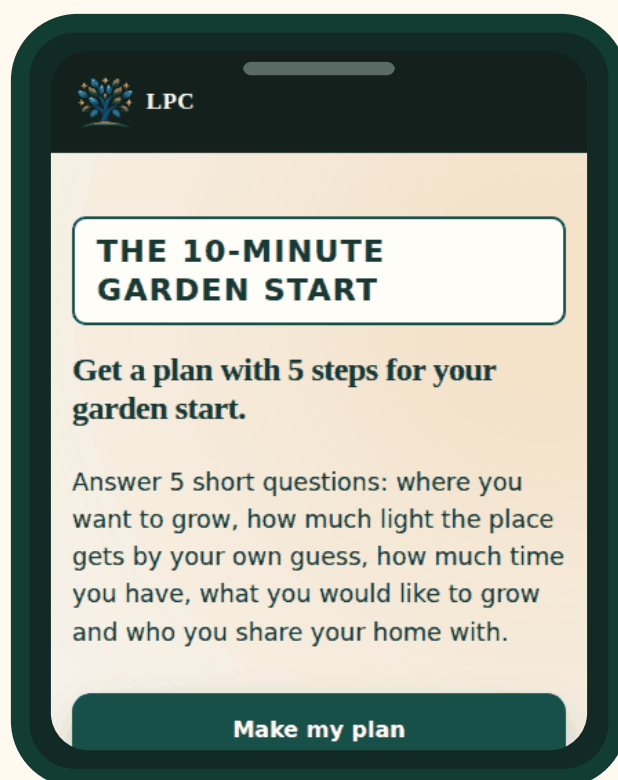
When you are ready, start again. Open your page. Pick the first step.

OPTIONAL COMPANION APP

The Garden Start Companion App

This guide explains the method. The Garden Start Companion App turns it into a plan for your life.

You answer 5 questions: where you want to grow, how much light the place gets by your own guess,



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how much time you have, what you would like to grow and who you share your home with.

The app gives you a plan with 5 steps: find your zone, choose a place, choose a pot, write what you plant and set a day to look again.

The app does not recommend plants or products, and it gives no advice about soil, water, feed, pests or chemicals. It does not promise that anything will grow.

Save favorites and add personal notes, so your app is tailored to your preferences.

CONTINUED

You can add a note that says when you last looked at your pot.

You can create 2 complete personalized plans free. After that, a one-time unlock of \$9 keeps it yours. There is no subscription and no renewal.

The app never asks for a ZIP code, an address, a card number, an account number, a Social Security number or a password.

Open the Garden Start Companion App

<https://gardenstart.lifeperksclub.com>

More Mini Guides and Companion Apps:
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FINAL CHECKLIST

Final Checklist: The 10-Minute Garden Start



☐ I wrote down what I know and what I do not know in a 10-minute task dump.

☐ I found my zone on the USDA page and wrote it down, or I wrote "zone later".

CONTINUED

☐ I know that, according to the USDA, the map is a general guide for perennial plants, and past weather cannot guarantee future weather.

☐ I chose one place and wrote one line about it.

☐ I chose one pot, or I wrote "need a pot".

☐ I wrote the name of what I plan to plant from its own label, or I wrote "not sure yet".

CONTINUED

☐ I wrote "ask" where I was not sure.

☐ I did not type my ZIP code anywhere except the USDA page.

☐ I wrote one note in my own words and set one check day.

☐ I know that this guide does not promise that anything will grow, and that the plant's label and the USDA page are the places to look.

The phrase 10-minute garden start means one short sitting in which you find your zone, choose one place, choose one pot and set a day to look again.

SOURCES

Sources Used for Garden Start Guidance

The statements about zones come from one U.S. government page. It was checked again on October 19, 2026. The page shows no date.

Check the official page for the latest wording.

The page is about how to use the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map.

This guide uses it only for these ideas.

You find your zone by typing your ZIP code on the USDA page. There are 13 zones, from 1 (coldest) to 13 (warmest), and each is 10 degrees Fahrenheit wide with an "a" and a "b" half of 5 degrees.

CONTINUED

A zone is based on the average annual extreme minimum temperature in winter, from 30 years of data, 1991 to 2020.

The USDA says the map is a general guide for perennial plants and that past weather cannot guarantee future weather.

It also says that a rare, extreme cold spell can kill plants that have done well for several years, that other conditions matter, that the map may miss very small local conditions, and that a change in a zone does not mean you have to remove plants that are doing well.

The 4 parts, the one place, the one pot, the one check day, the 10-minute task dump, the night

CONTINUED

before, the day and the first minutes after the start are our own suggestions. They are not official guidance.

This guide gives no advice on soil, water, feed, pests or chemicals, names no plants, and gives no prices and no brand names. The plant's own label is the place to look.

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Plant Hardiness Zone Map: how to use the maps.
<https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/pages/how-to-use-the-maps>

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