
Subject: more about gardening
Posted by [southdowner](#) on Mon, 13 Oct 2008 23:09:57 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

more about gardening

hopefully a link to todays post

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Laura](#) on Mon, 13 Oct 2008 23:20:09 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Urgh...this kind of thing makes me hate apartment living. I miss having garden space! This year we went crazy at the "garden center" (I put this in quotations because being from Iowa, I KNOW what a real garden center is, and this was the best Brooklyn could do for us) and bought window baskets for our fire escape and filled them with pansies, only to have a crazy aphid infestation take out the south box completely and nearly destroy the north box, until a very kind lady bug chose to lay her eggs with us and her larvae saved the day with their rapacious appetites for aphids.

I may choose regional theater over NYC merely for the chance to grow things again. (Among other reasons, but being surrounded by green again is a BIG draw).

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Susan from Athens](#) on Mon, 13 Oct 2008 23:48:39 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Laura wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 02:20Urgh...this kind of thing makes me hate apartment living. I miss having garden space!

I'm sorry to hear it, having grown up in an apartment with a garden on the balcony, a big balcony. Obviously there are limitations (not crushing your neighbours below because your plants weighed so much their ceiling collapses being one, having enough room to actually walk on your balcony or sit out being another) but there are also many joys and limitations are what bring out any gardener's creativity. Would I like to have a bed of gardenias flowering twice a year? Yes. I can't make one flower for more than two years in a row. Would I like roses twining through my balcony railings? Certainly? They die fast and furiously. But I have jasmine and nasturtiums and lilies and

hibiscus and amaryllis and bougainvillea and lemongrass and basil and oregano and a huge rosemary bush. But it all started with three pots and grew over time (and kept growing with some successes and more failure). Don't give up just from two boxes! Look at it as a 50% success rate. Most experiments have a far lower rate of success!

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Ithilien](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 02:38:22 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I have to agree about the seedlings thing. I have tried three separate batches of basil seed this year, and none of them have survived the invisible thing is lurking in my garden and eats basil seedlings.

I'd keep them inside, but the peat pellets make them prone to damping off and the peat pots filled with seed-raising mix don't hold water well enough for germination. Gah!

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Bratsche](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 03:43:44 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I'm always so glad when someone who loves gardening (like Robin so obviously does, sort of like she loves breathing, I think!), says something encouraging to those of us who aren't as steeped in dirt and green growing things. I have the space to put anything I want, and I'm gradually putting in things on a "I've always liked that, let's try one or two of those" basis; however, I sometimes feel like a bad plant mom given how haphazardly I care for my plants. Water, definitely (sometimes); weed around them, absolutely (at least once or twice a season whether they need it or not!), plan grand plans for what looks best together and how to have pretty things year-round, not so much. It's nice to be reminded that as long as I at least start trying things, I'll learn more as I go along.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Erika in Colorado](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 04:01:56 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Ohh! I made a real live blog post!

I do agree that lots of things are much easier grown from seedlings as opposed to seeds. I never grow tomato plants from seeds; that would be absolute insanity in Colorado unless you can start them inside (which I can't because my cat thinks all plants, flowers, and potpourri are snack mix).

Sadly, however, if I want much else, I'm so poor that I get friends to go in on seed packets with me.

And for those that think I'm just some freak with a green thumb, I've also failed with many vegetables and just learn for the next year. Friends and relatives who garden also save me from myself frequently. I just figure it's fun and it can't hurt to try.

OK! One last thing. I tried a spell check and this forum doesn't seem to think that "blog" is a word. Very funny in this context.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Lianne](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 04:21:10 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Erika in Colorado wrote on Mon, 13 October 2008 21:01my cat thinks all plants, flowers, and potpourri are snack mix
Oh, I am familiar with that. One of my cats does that, too, and she always manages to knock over and spill any water if it's a vase. You have my sympathies! I have to enjoy all my flowers outside on their plants. Which is nice because it gets me outside amongst them, but sometimes I really would like to bring in a rose to put by my desk.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Erika in Colorado](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 04:34:20 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Yep, Lianne! That's how it is for me, too. I'm so sad when someone gives me a flower arrangement and I have to put it on top of the 6 foot tall bookshelf.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Mrs Redboots](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 08:51:15 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Hmmmm, I'm no gardener, living in a block of flats which does have a communal garden, but I usually have growing things on my window-sill. Growing herbs from the supermarket are very cheap, and last forever, often if you cut them right down they'll grow back. At the moment, on my windowsill, I have, from left to right:

a bowl of daffodil bulbs bought in Lidl last spring; they are dormant, if not dead!
an orchid, which my daughter and her husband gave us as a "Thank you for our wedding"
present - it's dormant right now, but definitely not dead!
a large pot of basil
a geranium (which was/is my husband's; he was neglecting it in the spare room so I brought it in
here and it's now flourishing!
a Christmas cactus, now in its fourth year, which I hope will flower in a couple of months;
a pot of flat-leaved parsley;
a really ancient pot of chives that I should throw out, probably!

Meanwhile my mother, who does have a huge garden, far prefers pottering about in the
greenhouse playing with seedlings, and tends to lose interest once they are planted out. But she
did, some years ago, win a whole bed of rose-bushes in a competition; they are, sadly, past their
best now.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Susan from Athens](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 09:24:41 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Mrs Redboots wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 11:51
[*] a really ancient pot of chives that I should throw out, probably!
[/list]

My chives all flowered in the spring. Lovely blobs of lavender-coloured flowers and we ate them in
a salad: delicious. Of course now I have to find more and they are next to impossible to find in
Greece. We do have a name for chives, however, that I love: schinoprasso, which means literally
string leaks!

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [AJLR](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 09:45:54 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Robin said: Quote:With the exception of things like California poppies which you can just rip open
the seed packet and hurl in the general direction of your garden, growing from seed takes a lot of
trouble. Admittedly I started at the sharp end by growing roses from seed, but the principle of

fussing† remains.

I must just like fussing*. I quite agree that some of the 'growing from seed' things can be a bit of a pain but oh, the joy when things start appearing in the seed trays/pots! All those dear little plantlings, waiting to be nurtured and grown on and then planted out. I admit one is less sure how many plants one will eventually get from a given number of seeds (even without a cat that regards seed trays as a sort of chaise longue...) but I've found it worthwhile so far for the herbaceous stuff as well as the HHAs.

Thank you for the camellia nursery recommendation. Very useful.

*Please note I am not saying I'm 'organised'.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Robin](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 12:13:55 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Basil is also just *hard*. Basil is also the sharp end of raising from seed. I've tried growing basil too, but it's REALLY hard in England. I can usually keep a sturdy-seedling-by-someone-else's-efforts going, is about all.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [AJLR](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 13:13:33 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Robin wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 13:13Basil is also just *hard*. Basil is also the sharp end of raising from seed. I've tried growing basil too, but it's REALLY hard in England. I can usually keep a sturdy-seedling-by-someone-else's-efforts going, is about all.

Really? We've had more basil than I can keep up with this summer, all grown from seed. It doesn't grow well outside here, of course, but seedlings and plants with a bit of shelter went racing away.

Btw, re penstemons, you were right about the rather sub mixture from seed. I ended up with about 10 healthy plants that have all flowered this first year but they were in a very limited colour range.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [libbydodd](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 14:53:09 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Lianne wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 00:21Erika in Colorado wrote on Mon, 13 October 2008 21:01my cat thinks all plants, flowers, and potpourri are snack mix
Oh, I am familiar with that. One of my cats does that, too, and she always manages to knock over and spill any water if it's a vase. You have my sympathies! I have to enjoy all my flowers outside on their plants. Which is nice because it gets me outside amongst them, but sometimes I really would like to bring in a rose to put by my desk.

We've finally accepted that all plants and vases must live in our (thankfully large) bathroom which is off limits to our 3 cats. We are sure they think of it as their "salad bar"!

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Lianne](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 16:46:29 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

libbydodd wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 07:53
We've finally accepted that all plants and vases must live in our (thankfully large) bathroom which is off limits to our 3 cats. We are sure they think of it as their "salad bar"!

I used to take arrangements into work, but that's a little harder now that my home desk is my work desk. The bathroom sounds like a good solution! (And that's an amusing mental picture of a salad bar.) Won't work for me, unfortunately, since one bathroom belongs to the cats for their litterbox and the other suffers from too much heat and condensation if the door is always closed.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Mrs Redboots](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 18:20:49 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Robin wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 13:13Basil is also just *hard*. Basil is also the sharp end of raising from seed. I've tried growing basil too, but it's REALLY hard in England. I can usually keep a sturdy-seedling-by-someone-else's-efforts going, is about all.

I cheat by buying a large potful in Tesco's and putting it on the window-sill. It survives, even when Husband just gives it a tiny dribble instead of watering it thoroughly! It usually dies when we go away, though, as it does seem to need watering every five minutes - well, every other day.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Lianne](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 18:31:33 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I've got some weird kind of moth/winged insect living in my basil and it's getting eaten. Doing searches for moths and basil hasn't come up with anything yet. It had been doing really well, but now not so much, and I really think it's due to those winged things that fly out of it every time I water. They aren't anywhere else, and they weren't there when it was flourishing. We've still got enough to be able to use for cooking, but it's kind of frustrating... it was so beautiful before!

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [NotLonely](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 19:57:25 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

"With the exception of things like California poppies which you can just rip open the seed packet and hurl in the general direction of your garden, growing from seed takes a lot of trouble. "

Oooh, envy... makes me match my garden :d

I did just that, um, about Feb or Mar once I recovered enough of my balance to bear the thought of getting into my garden again. ONE poppy came up, and it's just now finished flowering, after about three rounds I think.

I've limited myself to buying seedlings now, as I seem to be unable to keep things alive if they're babies.

OTOH, I bought one basil a few years ago, and ever since I've had FORESTS come up. The only thing that grows thicker is clover - not even my lawn is that enthusiastic.

I keep having to remind myself that a garden doesn't give you an exam after one season / harvest period. It's a lifelong process of learning, pulling up hopeless cases, sighing and starting again. Fortunately, the sight of newly-planted / sprouting green stuff always cheers me right up! :p

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Erika in Colorado](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 19:59:09 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

libbydodd wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 08:53[We've finally accepted that all plants and vases must live in our (thankfully large) bathroom which is off limits to our 3 cats. We are sure they think of it as their "salad bar"!

Sadly, even this won't work for me, as my bathroom is like a long narrow hallway with only enough floor space to navigate. It's also potty training time for my two year old, and closed doors and pots would surely result in frequent accidents.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [NotLonely](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 20:06:12 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

And rhododendrons, Japanese maples, heathers, most trilliums, some gentians, some magnolias, and blueberries, which are pretty much the limit of my acid-loving/lime-hating plant knowledge, since I do not have acid soil and have to grow anything really strict about being lime-hating in pots. And hydrangeas if you want them blue.

Blueberries! Ooh! Do they need a rack? And, um, I always thought triliiums were something out of a Marion Zimmer Bradley?

the patio-sized peach tree I'm also thinking about;. . . .

Has anyone (of no expert-level practise LOL) tried patio-sized lemon trees? I'm thinking wistfully about it, but my stoep doesn't get direct sunlight in summer (although it gets VERY hot. We've already gone over 30 C) and hardly any shade in winter?

Trying my luck here..

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Maureen E](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 20:18:00 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

NotLonely wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 16:06
And, um, I always thought triliiums were something out of a Marion Zimmer Bradley?

They're a wild flower that's fairly common in the Midwest. One of those First Signs of Spring.

There we are: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trillium>

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [shalea](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 20:27:57 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Lianne wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 14:31 I've got some weird kind of moth/winged insect living in my basil and it's getting eaten. ...

It's not white flies, is it? They feed on sap rather than actually eating chunks but they're a real pain in this part of the US.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Honey_Bee](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 21:20:16 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Urgh...this kind of thing makes me hate apartment living. I miss having garden space!

I understand that completely! I just moved into an apartment and the idea of a house with a yard is a long way down the line. I've been researching potting mini-roses for my balcony but there's an overhang (I live on the second floor) and it doesn't ever get direct sunlight for longer than a couple hours and that's only if the weather is perfect. Though in Tennessee that's far more common than what Robin has to deal with in England.

Does anyone know if there's a certain variety of minis that tends to be hardier than others? And my tiny snapdragon blossoms, the only flowering plant I have in my apartment, are beginning to drop. I've got to get some color in here!

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [lthilien](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 21:42:23 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

NotLonely wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 16:06
Blueberries! Ooh! Do they need a rack?

If you get the right type, blueberries will grow happily in pots. You want to keep them watered (but

not soggy). Don't ever let them dry out. If you don't have acid soil, use azalea/camellia mix and matching fertiliser.

They're a long term project though. Unless you have money to burn, it'll take a couple of years before you get any fruit.

NotLonely wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 16:06

Has anyone (of no expert-level practise LOL) tried patio-sized lemon trees? I'm thinking wistfully about it, but my stoep doesn't get direct sunlight in summer (although it gets VERY hot. We've already gone over 30 C) and hardly any shade in winter?

I have a little Meyer one, but my Real Gardening Friend tells me that it isn't a real lemon; it's a cross between some other citrus and lemon, so that it's quite sweet. She recommends Lisbon, but that's a proper tree. Again, azalea/camellia mix and regular watering.

Subject: Re: more about gardening

Posted by [Susan from Athens](#) on Tue, 14 Oct 2008 23:30:00 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

NotLonely wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 23:06

Has anyone (of no expert-level practise LOL) tried patio-sized lemon trees? I'm thinking wistfully about it, but my stoep doesn't get direct sunlight in summer (although it gets VERY hot. We've already gone over 30 C) and hardly any shade in winter?

Trying my luck here..

I haven't but my sister, who lives in Piraeus, and has a little enclosed garden at the back of her apartment (it's first floor on the street side - American second storey - and ground floor at the back as she lives on a hill) has had a lemon tree in a large pot for many years. It hasn't grown very large (I'm fairly sure she doesn't feed it very often) but it gives her two or three lemons every season from what is no more than a bush. Her yard has maybe an hour of direct sunlight and gets fairly hot in the summer, although not as hot as you would think, because it is basically a hole in bedrock! So the tree is mostly in light shade but is happy about it.

Subject: Re: more about gardening

Posted by [Robin](#) on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 16:16:03 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Really? We've had more basil than I can keep up with this summer, all grown from seed. It doesn't grow well outside here, of course, but seedlings and plants with a bit of shelter went racing away.

You kept basil going through this AUGUST?? I'm IMPRESSED.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [Lianne](#) on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 17:01:07 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

shalea wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 13:27It's not white flies, is it? They feed on sap rather than actually eating chunks but they're a real pain in this part of the US.

Hrm. It might be. I didn't think they looked right at first, and I haven't seen eggs, but looking a little further I think you might be right. I was able to get a better look at one of them this morning, since I didn't forget to look before I watered, which is usually the case.

Thanks! :)

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [NotLonely](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 07:25:11 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Ithilien wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 23:42NotLonely wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 16:06
Blueberries! Ooh! Do they need a rack?

If you get the right type, blueberries will grow happily in pots. You want to keep them watered (but not soggy). Don't ever let them dry out. If you don't have acid soil, use azalea/camellia mix and matching fertiliser.

They're a long term project though. Unless you have money to burn, it'll take a couple of years before you get any fruit.

NotLonely wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 16:06
Has anyone (of no expert-level practise LOL) tried patio-sized lemon trees? I'm thinking wistfully about it, but my stoep doesn't get direct sunlight in summer (although it gets VERY hot. We've already gone over 30 C) and hardly any shade in winter?

I have a little Meyer one, but my Real Gardening Friend tells me that it isn't a real lemon; it's a cross between some other citrus and lemon, so that it's quite sweet. She recommends Lisbon, but that's a proper tree. Again, azalea/camellia mix and regular watering.

Thank you! Sounds like it should wait a bit...

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [NotLonely](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 07:26:11 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Susan from Athens wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 01:30NotLonely wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 23:06

Has anyone (of no expert-level practise LOL) tried patio-sized lemon trees? I'm thinking wistfully about it, but my stoep doesn't get direct sunlight in summer (although it gets VERY hot. We've already gone over 30 C) and hardly any shade in winter?

Trying my luck here..

I haven't but my sister, who lives in Piraeus, and has a little enclosed garden at the back of her apartment (it's first floor on the street side - American second storey - and ground floor at the back as she lives on a hill) has had a lemon tree in a large pot for many years. It hasn't grown very large (I'm fairly sure she doesn't feed it very often) but it gives her two or three lemons every season from what is no more than a bush. Her yard has maybe an hour of direct sunlight and gets fairly hot in the summer, although not as hot as you would think, because it is basically a hole in bedrock! So the tree is mostly in light shade but is happy about it.

Thanks!

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [AJLR](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 09:59:05 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Robin said Quote:You kept basil going through this AUGUST?? I'm IMPRESSED.

Yes, I'm not saying they weren't swimming for their little green lives once or twice. :) But in the

part of the greenhouse floor where we left it open to the earth, I had so many plants growing in there that the water got used up pretty quickly. And having so many basil plants in with the other things definitely discourages white fly. OK, I had a problem with spider mite and being a greenhouse newbie left it a bit late to get the bio-control in there (but boy did they have fun munching when they did get in!) but the basil sailed [sic] happily through everything.

Subject: Re: more about gardening
Posted by [shalea](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 15:10:10 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Ithilien wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 17:42NotLonely wrote on Tue, 14 October 2008 16:06
Blueberries! Ooh! Do they need a rack?

If you get the right type, blueberries will grow happily in pots. You want to keep them watered (but not soggy). Don't ever let them dry out. If you don't have acid soil, use azalea/camellia mix and matching fertiliser.

If I recall correctly, I think you also need multiple blueberry bushes if you want to end up with fruit and that you need to make sure you have the correct genders. Of course, all I can find in a quick web search is that the word "blueberry" is one of many which start to look VERY wrong after you've read it a few dozen times so I may be off base completely! :)
