THE BCS GARDENER

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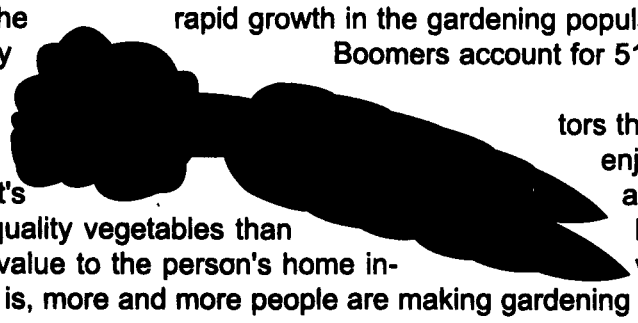
Gardening Becomes America's Favorite Pastime

In the last few years gardening has become the most popular hobby in America and studies show it will only increase. Two of every five adult Americans (42%) are gardeners. That means almost 78 million people in the U.S. are engaged in some form of gardening (i.e. vegetable, flower, ornamental).

Among the key contributors to the rapid growth in the gardening population is the emergence of the Baby Boomer generation (ages 30-49). The Baby Boomers account for 51% of the total gardening population - over 40 million people.

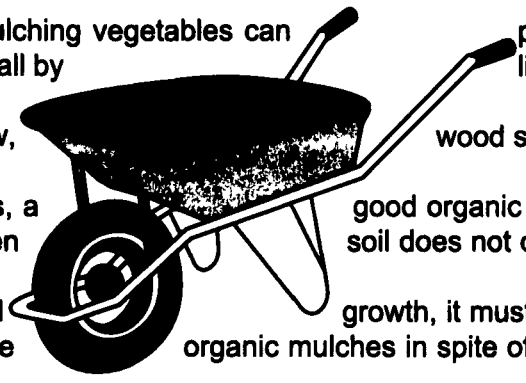


There are a lot of motivating factors that have helped increase gardening. The primary factor is that gardening is fun and enjoyable. People also benefit from exercise and fresh air that this activity provides. It's also a great stress reducer and gives the gardener an opportunity to grow better quality vegetables than he or she can buy in the grocery store. An added bonus is that gardening adds value to the person's home investment.

Regardless of what the motivation is, more and more people are making gardening a part of their lives, making it America's number one pastime.

To Mulch or Not to Mulch

Few jobs in the garden are as beneficial as the task of mulching. Mulching vegetables can provide amazing results by conserving soil moisture, maintaining soil temperature and above all by limiting grass and weed populations.



Mulch material - Organic materials include leaves, grass clippings, straw, wood shavings, manure and pine needles. Other materials include plastic and newspaper.

Mulching reduces cultivation - On soils that crust over after heavy rains, a good organic mulch will prevent the rain drops from packing the soil and closing the pores in the soil. When soil does not crust, less cultivation is needed.

Mulch as a weed control - In order for any organic mulch to stop weed growth, it must be thick enough to prevent weeds from growing through it. Some weeds will escape through the organic mulches in spite of the material used, but these can be easily pulled out.

Mulch to conserve moisture - Mulches slow down water evaporation from the soil, especially in the top six inches where most vegetable plant roots are located. Be sure soil has adequate moisture at the time the mulch is placed down. A mulch will help maintain an even moisture supply throughout the growing season.

Tilling

Tilling is one of the most critical steps in making a garden. When properly done, tilling enhances the quality of your soil, makes garden maintenance easier, and results in a higher yield.

It's never a good idea to till just after a big rain, or when the soil is too wet. To test for proper tilling conditions, grab a handful of soil, squeeze to form a ball, and open your hand quickly. If the soil ball falls apart, it's ready to till. If it retains its shape, it would be better to wait a day or two before starting your tilling. Tilling extremely wet soil can lead to soil compaction. If the ball crumbles or won't even form a shape, it's too dry and needs to be watered until the consistency is right. You don't want to till when soil is overly dry. If there's no moisture in the soil, turning it can lead to erosion.

When storing tillers inside, make sure that the fuel tanks are drained and run the tiller until it quits from fuel starvation. This will prevent varnish build-up in the carburetor and prevent any danger of gas fumes in the storage area.

Before storing your tiller for the winter, wash the tiller. Clean off excess dirt and oil, especially in the tines and undercarriage of the tiller; disconnect the sparkplug; wipe the tines and undercarriage with an oil-soaked rag. This will prevent rust and insure a long life for your tiller.

Frequent tilling of your garden aerates the soil and destroys weeds and unwanted garden pests. Using the right equipment for the job is essential. BCS has a tiller for every need, with a full range of attachments that make them useful in the yard as well as the garden.

Caring for Your Garden

- ✦ Cultivate early. The best time to kill weeds is when they sprout.
- ✦ Thin ruthlessly. Leave enough space between plants so they can mature easily.
- ✦ Be careful around the plants. One careless swipe of the hoe can destroy a lot of work and future vegetables.
- ✦ Stay out of a wet garden. Rust disease of beans and other diseases are easily spread when a picker goes through a row of wet plants.
- ✦ Water the ground, not the plants. Wet foliage can cause fungus diseases. Apply water to the base of the plant at sundown, so the heat of the day will not deplete its moisture.
- ✦ Keep weeds under control by tillage or mulching. Weeds take moisture, light and nutrients away from vegetable plants.

BCS

The Best Gardening System on Earth!