



## INTRODUCTION

No matter what you do in your outdoor green scene, there always comes a point where you have questions. Should I do this? What would happen if I did that? Or why won't this *darn thing* grow?

Well, I've gathered together quick and easy answers to hundreds of the most common gardening questions I could find. With my Super Garden Tips & Tricks, your yard can't help but rise, shine, and be rarin' to grow! So, the next time you have a question, reach for this Special Report instead of the bug spray, and you, I, and your yard will be glad you did!

## LAWNS

**QUESTION: At what rate do I apply dry laundry detergent to dog spots on my lawn? Also, after the detergent is applied, does it need to be watered in?**

Apply the laundry soap with your hand-held spreader set on the medium setting. It doesn't begin to work until you water it, so water it in well. And if you mix 4 cups of pelletized lime per 1 cup of dry soap, you'll get even better results.

**QUESTION: How can I get rid of Fairy Ring in my lawn?**

You need to poke lots of holes in the turf in and around the rings. Use your aerating sandals or a nail in a broom handle. Then apply dry laundry soap to the whole area with your hand-held broadcast spreader. Water in well. One week later, overspray the area with one cup of shampoo in a 20 gallon hose-end sprayer, and apply any organic lawn food like Milorganite. That should do it!

**QUESTION: Do you have a method for getting rid of fleas on dogs, and also in the grass where they breed?**

First thing, add Yeast and Garlic Bits to your pet's diet. Outdoors, any pyrethrin spray (like my Insect Spray, Total Insecticide or Dursban®) with a little dish soap added should solve the problem.

**QUESTION: Do you have anything to spray on Creeping Charlie that will at least slow its growth?**

Try dissolving 5 tbsp. of 20 Mule Team Borax in a gallon of water, and sprinkle it over the affected area.

**QUESTION: I need help eliminating moss in my yard.**

Moss control is easy - use Moss Master®, but pre-soak the area with Shampoo to magnify the results. For a long term solution, you have to improve drainage and/or lessen the shade—i.e., let the sunshine in!

**QUESTION: I have brown spots appearing on the perimeter of my lawn. I have tried Scott's 1,2,3,4 program without success. Please help.**

Apply any lawn disease control in the fall and again in the spring. If you will wash the lawn first with Plant Shampoo, and then apply an organic poultry based fertilizer next season, things should improve.

## Super Garden Tip

To get rid of wild onions in your lawn, cut off the tops, overspray the area with 1 cup of liquid dish soap per 20 gallons of water, and then apply any broad-leaf weed killer, adding 1 tbsp. of soap to the mix for better adhesion.

**QUESTION: What are your thoughts on planting Zoysia grass in the north? How long does it take for it to grow together? And what do I have to do to prepare the soil?**

Don't do it - you will be terribly disappointed. Zoysia is a southern grass, and doesn't do well north of the Mason - Dixon line.

**QUESTION: What can I do about the spots in my lawn where dogs have urinated, and the grass does not grow?**

Apply a mixture of 50% gypsum and 50% lime in spring and fall. Also, add yeast to his diet every so often, which will weaken the strength of his urine.



## TREES

**QUESTION:** My maple tree grows well, but three years after planting, it split the bark. I now have bare wood shavings where the bark is still firmly attached. It is growing new bark. How am I supposed to treat the exposed wood?

The problem is a natural and reoccurring one in shade trees in the northern U.S. It is called Southwest bark split, and it is caused by sunny and cold winter days. To treat it, wash the area with a warm soapy water solution, let thoroughly dry, and then treat the area with tree wound paint.

**QUESTION:** We have a 4 year-old Mountain Ash tree that had only 2 branches bloom, yet every other tree in the neighborhood is loaded with blooms. What can I do to make it bloom?

Root prune it in the fall by plunging a sharp blade into the ground out at the tip of the farthest branch all around the tree. Feed it next spring with an all purpose plant food, and then sit back and count your berries!

**QUESTION:** I have about 25 Azaleas around my house, none of which has ever bloomed. Do you have any ideas?

I think you will be pleasantly surprised if you apply a mixture of 1/2 cup of apple juice, 1/2 cup of any regular cola, and 1 cup of fish fertilizer in your 20 gallon hose-end sprayer, filling the balance of the sprayer jar with warm water, over the entire area.

**QUESTION:** Balsam firs and spruce trees grow along our country road. Some have browned, and are losing their needles. Not all are affected, but I don't want to lose any of them. Is it salt, rust, or bugs?

I would guess salt and/or dust pollution. A regular overspray with soap and water would do wonders for all of them. Follow that up with an application of my WeatherProof™ for iron clad protection.

**QUESTION:** I bought a foster holly with red berries 3 years ago. Since then, it has not produced any berries. Do I have to have two trees?

I highly recommend a family of 3 holly bushes. However, a male in the neighborhood can take care of a harem of hollies within a half mile.

**QUESTION:** This year, my plum tree had a sticky substance oozing out of the young plums, bearing no edible fruit for the season. Any ideas what I am dealing with?

A sick plum tree! Root prune the tree in fall, and then dormant spray in both fall and spring. Start a regular program next spring with an all purpose liquid fruit tree spray every 14 days all next season from flower drop until harvest.

**QUESTION:** My golden nine-bark bush has developed mildew and a gray powdery substance. What can I use to prevent this from ruining my bush?

I would give it a bath every 3 weeks with Plant Shampoo, and follow it up with an application of Bordeaux mix.

**QUESTION:** At the base of my magnolia tree is a deep hole full of ants and other pests. Should I use an insecticide?

You bet! Make a warm soapy solution adding Total® or Dursban® at the recommended rate, and then fill the hole with fresh soil.

**QUESTION:** The wind blew a branch off of my 3 year-old Bradford Pear tree, and now it is lopsided. Is there any way I can force a branch out of that side?

I'm afraid not. When large, major limbs of any tree are destroyed, new limbs usually will not be forthcoming.

## Super Garden Tip

To get rid of sumac and/or any other woody caned plants, apply any of the brush killers like Kleen-Up® or Round-Up®, overspraying the sprouts first with a warm, soapy water solution.

## FLOWERS

**QUESTION:** I have a big row of peonies. There is grass and some weeds in between them, and I would like to know if there is anything I can apply to kill the grass and weeds, but not the peonies?

Since peonies are single stem flowers, you can use a small sponge paint brush, dipped into Round-Up® or Kleen-Up®, and paint the grass dead without touching the peonies.

**QUESTION:** I would like to know what I can do for my Amaryllis that's got a very small root bulb? I'm trying to keep it going without much luck.

The only thing you can do is to replant it in any professional mix in a small pot, water, wait, and pray!

**QUESTION:** I just love your homemade concoctions, but I tried the coke, ammonia, and soap tonic on my geraniums, and they grew lush foliage and no blooms. Are they getting too much of something, or what?

If you used this formula, then they were mad at you for some reason: 1/2 can of beer, 1/2 can of regular coke, 1/2 cup of apple juice, 1/2 cup of ammonia, 1/2 cup of liquid dish soap, and 1/2 cup of any liquid lawn food in your 20 gallon hose-end sprayer. If you didn't use it, then there's always next year.

**QUESTION:** I've been trying to grow hollyhocks for several years, but they keep dying. Any ideas why?

Sounds like they're not getting the right food. Try feeding them with my new garden goodies blend - equal parts of human hair, dry oatmeal and crushed, dry dog chow mixed into the soil. Follow up with a dose of fish fertilizer.

**QUESTION:** I have a monster Morning Glory Vine growing all over my garden. How do I get rid of it?

Apply any of the systemic vegetation controls like Round-Up® or Kleen-Up® with a sponge type paint brush.

**QUESTION:** When I hang flower baskets on my front porch, the birds make their nests in them. Any suggestions on how to keep them from doing this?

Take a section of chicken wire, cover the basket with it, and then pull the plants through. That should stop your fine feathered friends from feathering their nest.

**QUESTION:** How do I make my carnations thrive?

The secret is to add sugar in the form of Classic Coke®. Also, add 1 oz. of fish fertilizer or SGH-15+ per gallon of water.

**QUESTION:** What can I do to make peonies take off?

If you're having problems, then you need to check their depth. Peonies should never be planted deeper than 2", nor shallower than 1". Also, try my SGH-15+ growth tonic; it'll make even the stubbornest non-bloomer burst into action!

### Super Garden Tip

To get your flowers off to a great start, feed them with a mixture of 1/3 human hair, 1/3 dry oatmeal and 1/3 crushed dry dog food mixed into the soil.

**QUESTION:** I have 5 roses, but only 2 climbers have roses in early spring. After that, no more blooms. I have done everything, but nothing helps. Any ideas?

I find that if you cut your original blooms off just above a 5 leaf cluster and do the same for all of the surrounding blooms, you will continue to get blooms all season long.

**QUESTION:** We had 4 trumpet vines next to our deck that did not blossom. Two years ago, we dug them up and planted something else. Since then, we've had shoots coming up through the deck, the surrounding shrubbery, and the bed itself. How do we get rid of them?

About the only thing I can recommend is to spray under the deck with a brush killer like Kleenup®, soaking the area with Shampoo first, and continue to pull the suckers from in and around the garden.



**QUESTION:** What kind of fertilizer should I use on rhubarb and strawberries?

You can use any dry garden food, as long as you mix half a cup of sugar per 5 lbs. of food. Broadcast this mixture over the area, and then water in well.

**QUESTION:** This year, my tomato plants dropped their leaves just before the fruit became ripe. What is causing the problem?

Some type of virus. Use an all-purpose liquid fruit tree spray every 14 days from fruit set next season, up until a month before harvest.

**QUESTION:** I had a big problem with squash bugs in my garden last year. They ate and killed everything!! How can I control them this year?

Use an all purpose liquid fruit tree spray or Methoxychlor at the recommended rate, and then follow it up with my All Season Green-Up Tonic or SGH-15+ every 2 weeks throughout the growing season.

**QUESTION:** What is the best way to plant, feed, care for and harvest onions?

I'm partial to bushel baskets. Fill them with 1/2 soil and 1/2 professional planting mix. Add 2 handfuls of wood ash, 1/2 handful of finely crushed eggshell, and 1 handful of human hair, dry, crushed dog food and oatmeal. Control insects with my Total Insecticide. Harvesting is easy - simply pull the basket out of the ground and remove the contents.

**QUESTION:** Do you have any idea what could be causing some of my tomato leaves to curl, and have new growth that doesn't look normal?

It sounds like a blight to me. If you use an all purpose liquid fruit tree spray at half the recommended rate every 14 days, you should be able to get the blight under control.

**QUESTION:** Do you have a "magic garden potion" for those of us who use only egg whites and eggshells? It seems like a waste of nutritional material, so I thought you might have a way to use either or both in my garden. I would certainly appreciate your advice.

Eggshells are great for your garden! Dry them naturally or in the oven or microwave, and then grind them into a fine white powder. They are a form of slow release calcium, and they cut the undersides of many soft-bodied insects as well. Egg whites dissolved in soapy water can be mixed with any insecticide - it will increase the effectiveness because it acts as a "spreader sticker".

### Super Garden Tip

To grow the tastiest potatoes in town, cut the bottom out of a bushel basket, dig a hole deep enough to place the basket halfway into the soil, and then refill it with a mixture of sand, compost, and your current garden soil.

**QUESTION:** We have a large garden, which does well except for the tomatoes. They start to grow nicely until they bloom, then the leaves shrivel and turn black, leaving only stems and tomatoes that are cracked and ugly. How do I get rid of the problem?

Sounds like a soil problem to me. So, I want you to spray the soil as soon as the temperature gets above freezing with a mix of 2 tbsps. of Clorox® bleach and 1/2 can of Sprite® in 5 gallons of water. This should cover 100 sq. ft. of garden area.

**QUESTION:** What can be safely used to keep the weeds out of a fairly new asparagus patch? I planted a new patch 2 years ago, and it is doing very well, but I have a tough time keeping it clean of weeds.

If you know where the centers of the plants are, place a plastic container over them and then spray the area around them with Roundup® or Kleenup®.



## PESTS



**QUESTION:** Do you have a remedy for grasshoppers in my garden? This past year, they ate the potato leaves and buds, and stripped them clean.

The chemical control is diazinon at the recommended rate, adding a small amount of liquid dish soap, liquid Sevin or Sevin dust at the recommended rate. This should do the job.

**QUESTION:** I've been unable to find any information about ground squirrels. They do not leave mounds or ridges, but they do so much damage. What do I have to do to kill them?

You have to use either traps, poison or gas. To drive them away temporarily, spray the area with a mixture of 1 cup of liquid dish soap, 1/2 cup of castor oil, and 1/4 cup of urine in your 20 gallon hose-end sprayer, filling the balance of the sprayer jar with warm water.

**QUESTION:** We are beekeepers, and we were wondering if the baby shampoo and ammonia you recommend in your tonics are safe for bees? Please advise.

I have never heard any of them complain (and I do listen to them), since baby shampoo is a softener, not a detergent, and ammonia is a pure form of nitrogen. If you are concerned, then apply the tonics either real early in the morning, or towards nightfall when they're back at their hive.

**QUESTION:** We have had a terrible summer with skunks, raccoons and some squirrels digging up our lawn. I think they were looking for grubs. What can I do to get rid of the grubs, and discourage the varmints from tearing up my lawn again next summer?

Early next spring, apply a mixture of 1 cup of dry laundry soap, followed by either Dursban® or Merit®, or a soil insect control containing "Oftanol" at the recommended rate. Do the same in early August. Unfortunately, grub control is a never-ending battle.

**QUESTION:** Our sidewalk is caving in. Little critters are digging underneath it, and throwing out all of the dirt. I've tried flooding them out, bleach and I've filled the hole 3 times with more dirt to no avail. What can I do?

Fill the area in with pieces of barbed wire, thorny branches and dry soil mixed with ready mix concrete. Pack it in securely, and that should do it.

**QUESTION:** We have a cottage on a lake, and each year, the muskrats use my hosta plants on the edge of our lawn to feed on. By mid-summer, the plants are sheared off. How can I keep the muskrats away from my plants?

Try spraying my All Purpose Pest Prevention Potion - a mixture of 1 cup ammonia, 1/2 cup of Murphy's Oil Soap, 1/4 cup of castor oil, and 1/2 cup of urine in your 20 gallon hose-end sprayer, filling the balance of the sprayer jar with warm water.

**QUESTION:** I have a problem with snakes settling in the crevices of our cement porch. How do I get rid of them?

Try shredding the skin of 2 lemons and mixing that with 1 cup of mothball crystals. Or use Dr. T's Snake-A-Way.

**QUESTION:** Rumor has it that you have the secret recipe to get rid of voles. My mother has been plagued with them for the past year, and she needs help!

To control voles, thoroughly mix 1/2 cup of liquid dish soap, 1/2 cup of ammonia, 1/2 cup of castor oil, and 1/2 cup of human urine, and apply at a rate of 1 cup to 20 gallons of water over 2,500 sq. ft. of yard area.

## Super Garden Tip

To keep squirrels, skunks and raccoons from demolishing your corn crop, lightly dab the corn silks with a Q-tip dipped in any cheap cologne or perfume. The varmints won't "dig" the scent - they'll leave the corn alone because they can't tell when it's ripe.



## HOUSE PLANTS

**QUESTION:** How do you get rid of a disease that looks like a small ball of cotton at the base of the leaf?

If you were using my All Season Clean-Up Tonic every 2 weeks, odds are, you wouldn't have that problem. To get rid of it now, use any all purpose liquid fruit tree spray applied at the recommended rate at 14 day intervals, adding 1/4 cup of antiseptic mouthwash, 1/4 cup of liquid dish soap, and 1/4 cup of chewing tobacco juice to the mixture.

**QUESTION:** What is your secret for restoring the brown ends on the leaves of my houseplants?

First, trim them up with a pair of sharp scissors. Then it sounds like you need to increase the humidity in your house. So buy a humidifier, or set out shallow pans of water in front of the heat registers. It will make your plants feel better.

**QUESTION:** I need help with mealy bugs. I have a greenhouse that's open to my house. I have orchids and Desert Rose that's covered with mealy bugs. Can you please help me before I lose them?

Sticky traps are a must in any greenhouse at all times, so pick up some at your local garden center. Methoxychlor or my Insect Spray are the chemical controls that will work.

**QUESTION:** I am trying to grow an "Orchid Cactus". What can I do to make it grow and flower?

You've got to run it bone dry in February, then it should come back to life.

**QUESTION:** I've been growing African violets for the last 30 years. Since last year, I've been fighting white powdery mildew. I've been spraying them, but nothing seems to help. What can I do?

Try using Bordeaux mix at a half the recommended rate on one plant just to see what happens. When you're mixing up the batch, mix at the grape recommendation.

**QUESTION:** I have a Christmas cactus that just likes to droop, and doesn't want to bloom. What can I do to help?

Your cactus needs a few days of cool weather (45-65°F) in the fall to trigger the blooming sequence. Keep it in a shady window until October 15th.

**QUESTION:** What can you tell me about citronella plants? Mine did very well outside this past summer, but it was too large to keep indoors. Can I keep it outside in the winter?

Citronella will not take temperature below 40° F, so you can't keep it outside. A semi-heated garage will help.

**QUESTION:** I know my hanging baskets of asparagus and Boston ferns should be submerged in water periodically. Do you have any tips on what to use in the "bath water", and how long they should stay in the water?

You should prepare the "bath" by using 1 tsp. of shampoo per quart of warm (not hot) water. Submerge the plants for 5 minutes or so. Then feed the plants liberally every 3 weeks, adding 1 tsp. of sugar per quart of plant food mix.

**QUESTION:** What special care or consideration does a dwarf banana plant require?

These plants must be grown in a large tub that is at least 2 feet in diameter. Put gravel in the bottom for drainage, and then fill it with professional planting mix. Keep the plant in bright sunlight, and feed it regularly with fish emulsion at the recommended rate, adding 1/2 cup of regular cola per gallon of water. And a breath of fresh air in summer will do wonders.

## Super Garden Tip

To bring an almost dead African violet back to life, feed her initially with a mixture of very warm green tea water and 1/2 cup of Classic Coke®. Two weeks later, add 1/4 tsp. of ammonia to the mix.



## ODDS AND ENDS

**QUESTION:** I've been told that our plants would do better if I didn't use tap water. What should I use?

Use tap water, adding one ounce of hydrogen peroxide per gallon of water to get rid of the additives.

**QUESTION:** I'm having a problem getting liquid fertilizer through my hose-end sprayer. What brand should I use?

If you are mixing it with water before you place it in the sprayer, you should not have a problem.

**QUESTION:** I have tried home solutions to attract hummingbirds, but ants and yellow jackets are all I get. How do I attract hummingbirds?

Use a small hanging hummingbird feeder, and when it's empty, wash it thoroughly in warm water (no soap) before re-hanging it.

**QUESTION:** We live in a development with a pond that has an algae problem. Are there any natural solutions?

The way to reduce algae in the pond is to reduce the use of nitrogen around the pond. So don't fertilize close to the water where it can run-off into the pond.

**QUESTION:** I'm trying to establish a long privacy screen of evergreens. The soil is heavy clay. I spent a small fortune on store bought topsoil, yet I have still lost over 100 young evergreens. What is a cheap, fast growing evergreen that won't require a lot of attention?

It's not the plant; it's the planting. An easy solution is to mound plant (plant in mounds of ordinary topsoil placed on top of the clay). Then you can grow whatever your heart desires.

**QUESTION:** What is lime-sulfur, and where can I buy it?

It's a fungus control for over-wintering diseases. You should be able to buy it in any good garden center.

**QUESTION:** The previous owner of my house added lime

and moss killer to the acidic, shaded soil in an attempt to grow grass. This failed, and now the moss is weak. How do I counteract the effect of the lime and moss killer to restore the moss to health?

Mix up a batch of my "Masterful Moss Mixture" - 1 can of Classic Coke® and 1/2 cup of ammonia in your 6 gallon hose-end sprayer, overspray, and then let set. Repeat this treatment monthly until you're seeing green.

**QUESTION:** How can I sprout and grow Buckeye seeds?

Being a maize and blue fan, I can't imagine why anyone would want to do that (you folks in Michigan and Ohio understand). But if you must, bury them in soil in an old nylon stocking for the winter. In the spring, cut the skin with a razor, and plant them in pots of professional planter mix.

## Super Garden Tip

To keep squirrels from making off with your prized strawberries, cover the plants with chicken wire tunnels. They're lightweight, easy-to-use, and provide iron clad protection.

**QUESTION:** I would like to know how the hydrogen peroxide and whiskey in your tonics work.

Hydrogen peroxide is used to kill the chlorine in the water that kills the good bacteria in the soil. Whiskey is an enzyme activator in my plant foods.

**QUESTION:** Can I pre-mix your different tonics, and store them for long periods of time?

You certainly can. I mix up a gallon of tonic at a time, and keep it capped, so the ammonia does not escape.



For more information on Jerry Baker's *amazing* lawn and garden tips, tricks and tonics, please write to Jerry Baker, P.O. Box 1001, Wixom, MI 48393. You can also visit him online @ <http://www.jerrybaker.com>