

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to tame an overgrown garden:

Maybe summer got away from you and you didn't get as much time to weed as you hoped you would. Maybe the summer was wetter than normal, and it resulted in lots of lush grasses and weeds crowding your vegetables. Sometimes, taking a glance at an overgrown garden can be really discouraging and you might have half a mind to just say, "Let's try again next year." However, it is quite possible to tame an overgrown garden and take back your beds from the weeds and still reap the harvest that's to come later that summer or early fall. Just because a garden is overgrown doesn't mean it is unable to be recovered.

First steps:

When it comes to recovering your overgrown garden, your very first step is to identify all the rogue plants, and the plant you had planned, in the bed that you are working to tame. You want to make sure you know which of the plants are weeds, and which you actually want to keep. To remove the weeds, make sure you dig out the roots so they don't grow back quickly. You may also need to mow the yard down or edge around the beds if it truly has gotten out of hand.

Dividing:

Sometimes, the overgrown beds are due to your plants continuing to grow and spread in the bed. For example, some perennials spread more than others. Instead of just digging them up and getting rid of them, you can divide your perennials to either plant elsewhere in your garden, give away or sell.



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Pruning:

For those plants – flowers, trees and bushes alike – that are maybe a little over-exuberant in their growth, you can prune them back to create a much fresher face lift for your garden. Prune early in the spring before the buds break out. Be sure to do your research so you don't drastically prune back a tree that might not respond well to pruning. For larger plants and trees, trim back the plant by one-third over the process of three years. For those plants that you know will benefit from pruning, prune them back by one-third each year.

Weeding:

There are several ways to go about weeding your overgrown garden. You can hand weed the beds, but there are two other methods that may prove to be more beneficial than using your hands.

For gardeners who aren't worried about chemicals, you can spray the weeds in your garden with sprays to get rid of them. Don't



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spray when it's windy, or the chemicals may fall on the plants you want to keep. Another method is to hoe the plants down and into the soil and then cover the ground with black plastic. This is a process called solarization and will kill most, and sometimes all, weeds within a few weeks.



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