

## May Flowers

### Website has tips, photos and videos to help you grow as a gardener

According to the old saying, April showers bring May flowers. Anyone who has a garden knows it's not quite that easy.

It's more like, April showers, plus advanced planning, plus a few trips to the garden store, plus starting some seeds indoors, plus some digging, raking and weeding brings May flowers.

A nice garden, whether it's flowers, edibles or general greenery, adds so much to the enjoyment of your property. It's beautiful to look at, provides habitat for all sorts of fauna, is good for the environment and can even put food on your table. But it also takes some hard work and specialized knowledge to be successful.

**FineGardening.com** can't help much with the manual labor, but it can provide a lot of expert advice. The site is part of Taunton Press, a multi-media company that also owns Fine Woodworking, Fine Cooking and Fine Homebuilding. They publish books, magazines and digital products for do-it-yourself enthusiasts.

The website is a photo-filled explosion of color and informa-

tion. It's geared toward the more serious gardener, but even weekend hobbyists will find it useful.

The home page features a large slide show at the top highlighting several featured articles. Below that are several photo links to other features. There's also a photo of the day that displays viewer submitted garden photos.

Scroll down the page to see gardening books and DVDs for sale. At the very bottom is an index of links for the interior content of site, and links to its sister sites. There's a rail of ads down the right side of the page.

#### Plethora of plants

Across the top of the page is a navigation bar with drop-down menus for the rest of the site. The first category is Plants. It contains a plant guide with hundreds of species. Each entry features the name, both common and latin, a thumbnail picture and a brief description of the plant. Clicking on the entry brings you to more detailed information, including size, light and water needs, maintenance requirements, bloom time and more.

There are more than a dozen other subcategories under the plant tab, including annuals, bulbs, grasses, perennials and trees. Each subcategory contains several articles on the topic. The articles are full of good information and accompanied by numerous photographs.

The next main category in the navigation bar is the How-To section. It's set up the same way as the Plants section, with numerous subcategories, each one containing multiple, related articles. How-To covers topics like composting, fertilizing, lawn care, watering and maintenance.

The next section is Design, which is set up the same as the others. It covers a wide range of topics, from different plant types to different locations on a property to design principles.

The Inspiration section has articles on using color, increasing the curb appeal of your property and creating inviting spaces. Other sections include Blogs, Edibles, Videos and Plant Talk. There's also a section devoted to the printed magazine version of the site and a shopping section.

Fine Gardening is a professionally designed site that seems to take its inspiration from seed packages. It uses a lot of rich, deep colors and close up photos of beautiful flowers. The typography is unified, and the navigation is intuitive. The site was sometimes slow, but I never know if that's because of its architecture or my web service at work. If you're looking to expand your gardening knowledge, this site is worth a visit.

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