



The Old Farmer's Almanac has guided gardeners for centuries

When I walked out the back door this morning, the sun was shining, the blanket of snow in my yard was slowly melting, revealing random patches of



KEVIN O'NEILL
InSites

grass, and geese were honking overhead. I wouldn't say winter is completely done with us, but it's time to start thinking about spring.

One of the pleasures of warm weather is getting outside and working in the yard. Every year I get big ideas about what I'm going to do in our garden. And every year my lack of time and horticultural knowledge leave me

coming up short of my goals. But that doesn't stop me from planning, and that involves finding good online gardening resources.

A site I find useful for planning a garden is The Old Farmer's Almanac (almanac.com). The site covers much more than just gardening, but farming is in its name, so it stands to reason that it knows how to grow things. The Almanac is North America's oldest continuously published periodical, fulfilling its mission of being "useful, with a pleasant degree of humor" since 1792.

The Gardening section of the site is accessed via the main navigation bar that spans the top of the home page, just below the site's title. It features two main

subsections, Tools and Advice, each of which is further divided into more specialized areas.

Under Tools there's Garden Planner, which is a service you can purchase that provides digital tools to plan and maintain a garden. As far as I can tell, this is the only feature in the gardening section you have to pay for.

Under that is a Planting Calendar, which tells you when to start a variety of vegetables based on your zip code. It features spring and fall and indoor and outdoor guides. Below that is a Frost Dates feature that tells you when to expect the first and last frosts of the year based on location. Garden Tips by Month is a list of tips and tasks you should be doing based on date and location. The last section

under Tools is How-To-Videos. There are hundreds of short videos covering a wide variety of gardening topics.

There are 10 categories under the Advice section. The first one, Learn How to Garden, is for beginners and covers the basics of starting different types of gardens. There is a lot of information here covering many aspects of gardening. The next section is Robin's Garden Column, a series of articles on a variety of garden issues. Next is the Growing Guide Library, which is a comprehensive collection of guides covering many specific plants in multiple categories, including food and decorative plants.

The rest of the advice sections cover specific types of gardening, such as vegetables, fruits,

herbs, flowers and houseplants. There's a section on pests and diseases and a section on container gardening, which is a good option if space or weather are a concern.

As mentioned, the Farmer's Almanac has been around for a long time. The content is backed up by more than two centuries of experience, so you can be pretty confident that the information is good. The site is cleanly designed and functional. The typography has a clear hierarchy, the navigation is logical and the images and videos are of high quality. It may not be as trendy as some sites, but it's a very useful resource.

KEVIN O'NEILL is a staff artist for The Times-Tribune. Share your favorite websites with him at koneill@timeshamrock.com.