



**SEED
STARTING TIPS**



**HOUSEPLANTS
IN WINTER**



**2022 GARDEN
TRENDS**

THE GARDENERS GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA

President's Message

We are starting the New Year with hopes for a better year and way forward from the long pandemic. Our first indicator of optimism is the fact that we have a new garden club joining our organization this year! Welcome to Panora Garden Club, located in Panora, Iowa and thank you to Tamara Deal of that club for getting them on board. We hope you will enjoy our wonderfully informative newsletter, attend our conventions and participate in our contests, scholarship and award programs.

And speaking of conventions, I will be making contact with your clubs by phone this month to get an update on interest in attending a convention this year. We have contacted you electronically with a survey asking how many club members would likely attend a convention in either June or September with the location to be near our headquarters on the Ohio State University campus in Wooster, Ohio. It's a beautiful area, with much to see and do and we are ready to welcome our members for a fantastic experience.

The scholarship program will continue this year, and the JUNE 1 deadline and application requirements will remain the same.

The photo contest is beginning again, with a deadline change to MAY 1, 2022. I have not mailed the plaques and the certificates for last year's contest yet in the hope that I will be able to present them in person at the Convention in either June or September and show off the photos, in addition to the winners for 2022. DON'T MAKE ME HAVE TO MAIL THEM! Let's get together this year.

-Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich

2022 NATIONAL OFFICERS

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Winners!

Congratulations to the winner of the National Newsletter Naming Contest who would like to remain anonymous. The runner-up was Frank Cooley and third place was Gwen Raupfer. Congratulations and thank you to all who participated!

In Honor Those Gone Before Us

Jerry Harn – Lifetime member of TGOA
 Leonard (Buddy) Goeben – The Gardeners Club of Green Bay
 Ruth Goeben – The Gardeners Club of Green Bay
 Donna Maki – The Gardeners of Lima

A memorial donation was made in honor of Donna Maki by her husband, Steve.

Officer Pins are Available!

Clubs! The TGOA has pins available for the installation of officers and board members. Pins are \$5 each plus postage. Send your request to toga.org@gmail.com.

2022 Convention Survey Reply Request

If you have not already, please email the answers to these questions to tgoa.org@gmail.com.

1. **Do you plan to attend the Nation Convention this year?**
2. **Do you prefer June or September for the Convention date?**

The 2022 TGOA Convention will be held on the Ohio State University Campus. Potential dates are mid-June or mid-September. Let us know what your preferences are!

OUR MISSION

The mission of The Gardeners of America shall be to promote gardening education and related environmental issues to its membership and the gardening public through charitable educational and scientific means.

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Welcome!
A VERY SPECIAL WELCOME TO THE PANORA GARDEN CLUB! WE ARE SO HAPPY TO HAVE YOU AS A PART OF THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA!

Why Start Seeds Indoors?

From Burpee.com

MUCH MORE VARIETY

You can buy seeds for many more vegetable varieties than you can find for sale as young plants. Starting from seeds indoors allows you to grow a wider range of flavors, shapes and colors of your favorite vegetables!

IT'S NECESSARY FOR SOME PLANTS

Many of our favorite vegetables—including tomatoes and peppers—are native to warmer climates where they get more time to grow outdoors than is possible in most of the United States. Their seeds will not sprout in cool spring soil, and fruits need more sun to ripen than is available in the waning days of autumn. If you were to sow tomato seeds outdoors in May in New England or the Midwest, plants would take so long to grow that the first frost in October would likely kill them before you got a single ripe tomato.

EARLIER AND GREATER YIELD

Even for crops that don't come from warmer climates, starting seeds indoors gives some plants a head start for earlier harvests and greater yield. The same is true for many of our favorite annual flowers. If you start them indoors, they can spend more time in your garden flowering and looking their most beautiful. Many perennials also benefit from indoor sowing!

Note that not all plants should be started indoors, and some are best sown directly in the garden. If you're unsure of what to do, just refer to the directions on your seed packet.

Top 9 Seed Starting Tips

1. DON'T TAKE ON TOO MUCH

While you learn how seed starting works, indoor sow no more than a couple dozen plants in three or four varieties. It's not complicated or difficult once you understand the process, but it's best to start small so you don't get overwhelmed at first.

2. FIND A GOOD GROWING MEDIUM

Seedlings are very delicate. Start them in a fresh, sterile seed-starting mix that is light and fluffy and designed to hold just enough moisture. If the growing medium is too wet or not sterile, disease can strike. If it's too heavy or sticky, fine new roots won't be able to push through it. Burpee has a range of great seed-starting mixes, from compressed coir pellets (made of coconut husk fibers) that expand when wet, to bags of loose seed-starting formula.

3. CHOOSE THE RIGHT CONTAINER

Anything that will hold the growing medium and has drainage holes will work for indoor sowing, but we recommend specially designed seed starting kits because they include everything you need to grow strong, healthy seedlings. An alternative is biodegradable pots that break down in the soil.

4. GIVE SEEDLINGS PLENTY OF LIGHT

Seedlings need lots of light or they will be spindly and feeble. A sunny, south-facing window will do the trick for a handful of plants if you are not too far north, but artificial grow lights will ensure that your plants get the light they need even during shorter winter days. Leave the lights on for 16 hours and off for 8 hours at night, keeping the lights just 3-4 inches above the plants.

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Top 9 Seed Starting Tips Continued

5. PROVIDE GENTLE WARMTH

Seed starting happens in two stages: germination and growing. Germination is the sprouting stage, when the root and leaves emerge from the seed. You won't need light at this stage because it occurs under the soil, but you will need gentle warmth (not harsh heat). You can provide heat by using special heat mats. These will keep your seedlings about 10 degrees F warmer than the air temperature, allowing for faster germination. Once you see green sprouts about ½-inch tall, you need plant lights. You can remove heat mats as long as the room temperature is between 60-70 degrees F.

6. KEEP SOIL EVENLY MOIST

While water is essential for plant growth, overwatering is the most common cause of seedling failure. Sow seeds in an evenly pre-moistened mix. It should be moist but not soaking wet. Loosely cover the container to hold in humidity while seeds germinate, allowing for some air circulation. Burpee's seed-starting kit lids are designed perfectly for this! Remove the lid after 50% of seeds have sprouted. Once plants are up, they need more light and air circulation to thrive.

7. CHECK SEEDS DAILY

This is the secret to successful seed starting: you should check your seeds daily. See if seeds have sprouted so you can remove the cover when it's time; make sure they stay properly moist but not too wet; check your reservoir if you have a self-watering kit; and monitor seedlings so you can raise lights as they grow taller. If you are starting seeds on a windowsill, turn plants every day so they don't bend toward the light.

8. WATCH THE WEATHER

Although a few crops can go outside earlier (refer to the seed packet), most should stay indoors until after the last frost date for your area has passed and your soil has warmed. If your area is having a cold spring, hold off. Gardeners are always eager, but many a carefully nurtured tomato seedling has been killed by a May frost or simply slowed down by cold soil.

9. 'HARDEN OFF' SEEDLINGS BEFORE TRANSPLANT

Finally, introduce your plants to the sun gradually, a process called "hardening off". Expose them to sunlight for one hour more each day for a week. During this time bring them to a protected location outside when they are not in the sunlight. If there will be a frost at night, bring them inside. After a week or so, they will have acclimated to the outdoors and will be ready to transplant into your garden!



How to Care for Houseplants in the Winter

5 Adjustments to Make for Winter

By MARIE IANNOTTI for the [spruce.com](https://www.spruce.com)

Your houseplants aren't immune to life-threatening challenges during the winter, even though they live in a temperature-controlled climate. Indoor plants, whether they are year-round houseplants or plants you brought indoors to over-winter, can be affected by several winter stress factors, including temperatures that fluctuate from daytime heat to evening chill, dry air, and short day that reduce the amount of light they receive. Keep your houseplants thriving by modifying their care during the cooler months of the year.

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES YOU MAY NEED

The supplies you'll need for winter houseplant care will vary depending on your environment, but may include any or all of these:

- Plant mister
- Room humidifier
- Watering can
- Supplemental grow lights (if needed)

BEFORE GETTING STARTED

Different plant species can vary considerably in their winter care needs, so always do a little research to learn the particular needs of your plants. The following tips offer a good general guideline, but the precise needs of an amaryllis or poinsettia, for example, will be different from a rapidly climbing pothos or a potted geranium plant that's coming indoors for the winter.

In general, try to mimic the winter conditions of the regions where the species are native. For example, plants originating in the jungle tropics, where there is little difference between conditions in winter and summer, often do not have the same dormant period as plants originating in more temperate zones. While there are some general guidelines, remember that the goal is always to mimic the plant's natural outdoor winter habitat to the degree that you can.

1 ADJUST YOUR WATERING ROUTINE

It might sound counterintuitive, but most indoor plants need less water during the winter. While it's true that winter air is drier, plants experience a slower rate of growth during colder months; some even go completely dormant. Therefore, plants need less water to keep hydrated, and overwatering can lead to root rot. Keep in mind that different plants have different water needs—drought-tolerant cacti and other succulents might not need watering at all, while some tropicals might still require more regular watering.

Surface soil can dry out more quickly during winter months, but that's not a good indicator that the plant needs water. Push your finger into the soil to determine if it is dry an inch or two below the surface—that's when it's time to bring out the watering can.

2 Alter Humidity Levels

Low humidity levels can be the biggest hurdle that houseplants must overcome during winter. The humidity level in heated homes can drop to 10 to 20 percent in winter, and plants prefer a level closer to 50 percent. If you have a humidifier in your home, move your plants to a spot where they will enjoy its benefits. If you do not have a humidifier, raise the humidity level by other means.

Do not use cold water to water your houseplants. Use water that is about room temperature to avoid shocking the plant's roots.

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house-plants

for LOW, MEDIUM, & HIGH LIGHT

HIGH LIGHT

WINDOW DISTANCE
EAST/WEST 0'
SOUTH 1-5'



MEDIUM LIGHT

WINDOW DISTANCE
NORTH 0'
EAST/WEST 1-3'
SOUTH 3-10'



LOW LIGHT

WINDOW DISTANCE
NORTH 1-3'
EAST/WEST 2-10'
SOUTH 15-20'



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Winter Care for Houseplants Continued

Start by clustering your plants in groups. Plants naturally release water through their leaves by transpiring, so grouping them together will put that moisture to good use. Bathrooms and kitchens are the best rooms to congregate your plants because they absorb moisture from showers and cooking activities.

Another good option is the old trick of placing your plants on or near a tray of water. But, don't let the plants sit directly in the water. Place pebbles or stones in the tray to raise the bottom of the pots above the water level in the tray and place the pots on top of the stones. This will increase humidity levels without inviting root rot.

Misting tends to be better at making a gardener feel good about themselves rather than benefiting the plants. You might think you are giving your plants some relief, but misting is only a temporary blast of moisture. To be effective you need to mist multiple times a day to really see any benefit because indoor temperatures evaporate moisture quickly. If you have only a couple of plants and you think you will be very conscientious about misting, give it a try. It's hard to over-mist an indoor plant. During humid summers, misting plants can lead to fungal problems, but that should not be a problem during winter.

3 PAY ATTENTION TO TEMPERATURE

Most plants, like people, are comfortable in daytime temperatures between 65 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit and nighttime temps above 50 degrees Fahrenheit. To provide that for your plants, keep them away from both cold drafts and sources of heat such as radiators, ovens, fireplaces, and electronic devices. Fluctuations in temperature can kill houseplants just as easily as prolonged periods of heat or cold.

4 FOLLOW THE SUN

Not only are there fewer hours of sunlight during winter, but the rays also come in at a lower angle. You might need to relocate your houseplants to a brighter spot or even add supplemental light. A good spot is a south- or west-facing window that remains sunny all day. However, don't move plants too close to a frosty window because they might get a draft.

Rotate the pots about a 1/4 turn whenever you water your plants. This ensures that all sides of the plant receive some sun and grow evenly, rather than some branches stretching to reach the light. Layers of dust on plant leaves can also reduce the amount of light they receive.

Wiping down leaves with a damp cloth will remove this dust and allow the plants better access to light during the winter.

5 PUT YOUR HOUSEPLANTS ON A DIET

Most houseplants don't need any fertilizer in winter because they are not growing as actively. Feeding them now will just upset their natural cycle, so stop feeding until early spring. When you start to see signs of new growth or the existing leaves appear to be greening up, resume fertilizing to give them a boost for the growing season.

In locations where winter sun is nearly absent in winter and plants must get most of their light from supplemental lighting, they will need to be exposed to the grow lights for longer periods. If a plant requires six hours of direct sunlight, it may need as much as 12 or 14 hours of supplemental light to give it an equal amount of energy. Grow lights are considerably less intense than direct sunlight, so plants need longer exposure to receive adequate energy.

8 Surprising Health Benefits of Gardening

From UNC Health Talk

Planting flowers and vegetables can reap bountiful bouquets and delicious harvests for your dining table. But did you know gardening also can do wonders for your well-being? Here are eight surprising health benefits of gardening.

1. GARDENING CAN BUILD SELF-ESTEEM.

Maybe you don't think you were born with a green thumb, but after tilling, planting, nurturing and harvesting plants, you might see a slightly different person in the mirror: a person who can grow things and is a little more in tune with the earth.

It always feels good to accomplish new tasks, and if you can grow a garden, what can't you do?

2. GARDENING IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEART.

All that digging, planting and weeding burns calories and strengthens your heart.

"There are physical benefits from doing the manual labor of gardening," says UNC Health internal medicine physician Robert Hutchins, MD, MPH. "It's hard work to garden, and it provides some cardiovascular benefit."

3. GARDENING REDUCES STRESS.

Gardening can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

"Gardening gives you a chance to focus on something and put your mind to work with a goal and a task in mind," Dr. Hutchins says, "which is helpful especially now with so much illness and death and talk of death, just to see things growing and things thriving."

4. GARDENING CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY.

Getting dirt under your nails while digging in the ground can make you pretty happy. In fact, inhaling *M. vaccae*, a healthy bacteria that lives in soil, can increase levels of serotonin and reduce anxiety.

5. GARDENING CAN IMPROVE YOUR HAND STRENGTH.

All that digging, planting and pulling does more than produce plants. Gardening also will increase your hand strength. What a great way to keep your hands and fingers as strong as possible for as long as possible.

6. GARDENING IS GOOD FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY.

Gardening can be a solo activity or an opportunity for bonding with your family and friends. The happiness and stress relief that gardening provides is a great thing to share with loved ones. Also, gardening has special benefits for kids. Early exposure to dirt has been linked to numerous health benefits, from reducing allergies to autoimmune diseases.

7. GARDENING CAN GIVE YOU A BOOST OF VITAMIN D.

A healthy dose of vitamin D increases your calcium levels, which benefits your bones and immune system. Exposure to sunlight helped older adults achieve adequate amounts of vitamin D. Just don't forget your sunscreen.

8. GROWING YOUR OWN FOOD CAN HELP YOU EAT HEALTHIER.

If you have a vegetable or herb or fruit garden, you're getting fresh produce that you know hasn't been treated with pesticides.

"It's essentially as farm-to-table as it gets," Dr. Hutchins says, "if you're eating what you're growing."

2022 TRENDS IN GARDEN DESIGN

We share 10 gardening trends on the rise in 2022

By Justine Guidry for gardendesign.com

The trendiest thing you can do in your garden is whatever makes you happy! While we encourage that to be your goal, we still love to share what's rising in popularity, in hopes of providing some inspiration to gardeners everywhere.

The forecast for 2022? Intention in the garden. Considering how everything—each plant, piece of garden art or furniture, structure, material, pot, and more—contributes to your space as a whole.

1. INCLUDING PLANTS THAT TRANSPORT YOU TO THE TROPICS

Travel restrictions continue to deter many from venturing out, but that doesn't mean you can't still get the feeling of being in a far-off destination. The types of plants best for evoking the "faraway" feels? Tropicals. Though tropical plants have always been a favorite, nurseries have seen a recent boost in popularity.

If you're new to tropicals, here are some beauties to get you started:

Caladiums (elephant's ear), which come in varieties for shade or sun, are known for their showy foliage.

Rose of Sharon is a hardy hibiscus with some varieties that can be grown down to Zone 5.

Rose mallows offer stunning flowers similar to hibiscus. Many varieties are hardy to Zone 4.

Cannas have jungle-like leaves and upright stems with blooms in colors ranging from pale pastels to vibrant oranges and reds.

2. BLURRING THE LINES BETWEEN INDOORS AND OUT

You've heard of bringing the outdoors in and bringing the indoors out—but why not both? So much time at home has led to gardeners realizing that blurring the lines between indoors and out extends the living area. When you stop limiting your idea of "home" to the structure on your property and instead consider your entire property your home, you can create a strong sense of place and connection to the natural world.

Ways to bring the outdoors in:

Set up a small herb garden in front of a sunny window.

Use grow lights to bring plants into rooms that don't get natural light.

Place hanging planters outdoors, positioning them in front of a window so you can look out and see greenery.

Plant a climbing plant along a trellis that's positioned next to a window so you can catch glimpses of it.

Ways to take the indoors out:

Set up "garden rooms" to extend your living space, providing you a place to get cozy while enjoying fresh air.

Screen areas using tall shrubs or hanging plants to create the sense of enclosure you get indoors.

Provide ample lighting with string lights, uplighting, lanterns, and outdoor lamps, etc.

Get comfy. A lounge chair or hammock will make your space more hospitable.

3. DESIGNING WITH DARK FOLIAGE

Plants with bright flowers or vibrant foliage colors such as silver or chartreuse are standouts on their own. But the secret to really making them pop is dark foliage. Here are just a few stunners:

Crape myrtle (Zones 6-10) is a deciduous tree known for its resilience. Try varieties with dark foliage such as Center Stage® Red.

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Heuchera (Zones 4-9) thrive in a variety of habitats and come in many colors. A favorite dark variety is Primo® ‘Black Pearl’.

Ninebark (Zones 2-8) provides interest all year with its peely bark. The dark leaves of Summer Wine® Black contrast its white flowers.

Smoke bush (Zones 4-8) offers striking color and large, showy flower panicles that create a smoky effect. We love Winecraft Black®.

Sweet potato vine is typically grown as an annual and is perfect for hanging planters. Try Sweet Caroline Bewitched After Midnight™.

4. GARDENING FOR A CHANGING CLIMATE

Long-time gardeners know that changes in weather are affecting the way we garden. We’re all familiar with drought-tolerant gardening and including plants that can handle excessive temperatures, but another manner of gardening is gaining traction: gardening for fires and floods. Gardening for firescaping:

- Choose drought-tolerant plants that retain water which are less likely to immediately ignite.
- Avoid plants that have a lot of sap or resin-materials used to start fires.
- Add features such as stone paths or walls that function as a firebreak.
- Prune back branches of trees that hang over structures.
- Create defensible space around your home which can slow and sometimes even stop fire.

Gardening for flooding & excessive rain:

- Improve water runoff patterns by incorporating rain garden design principles.
- Create a swale to distribute water more equally in an area.
- Reduce runoff by including permeable surfaces that allow water to slowly percolate into the soil.
- Choose plants for erosion control, especially on hillsides. These plants have roots that run deep and hold topsoil in place.
- Select water-loving plants for locations on your landscape where water collects.

5. TAKING YOUR FOOD FROM START TO FINISH

Edible gardening is a perpetual trend, but it’s always evolving—and so is the way gardeners approach it. An aspect of this trend that continues to rise in popularity is growing food from seed.

Last year, many seed companies reported record sales—some completely sold out of edible seeds, and many gardeners weren’t able to get any. If you’re interested in growing food from seed, get your seeds early!

For some gardeners, eating what you sow isn’t a new concept. But others are just discovering the many benefits:

- Ensuring clean eating. You control the type of soil, fertilizer, and seeds that are used.
- Saving money. Buying 100 seeds is sometimes less expensive than buying one transplant.
- Experiencing joy. Taking your food from seed to table is fun.
- Involving kids. Kids are more likely to eat food they’ve grown.
- Reducing your plastic use. You’ll be purchasing less produce at the grocery store. You can also use Eco-Pots instead of plastic seed-starting trays (they also makes transplanting easier!).

6. GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

Gardeners have been striving to make their gardens more wildlife friendly for years. But it’s becoming more common for gardeners to be more intentional about every single thing they do—not just putting up a bird feeder and calling it done. They’re finding that you can have it both ways: a garden that’s beautiful and serves local wildlife.

Looking for inspiration?

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- Reduce or replace your lawn with alternatives that do more to support pollinators, wildlife, and soil health.
- Include water features that provide a place for wildlife to visit—see this Delaware garden for inspiration.
- Use a diverse mix of plants that thrive in your region as displayed in this eye-catching garden in Portland.

7. MAXIMIZING BALCONIES & PORCHES

If small-space gardening at your home is limited to a balcony or porch—this one's for you. Staying at home more has led people to become more and more creative with their spaces. It's truly incredible to see how many plants can fit in even just 30 square feet (and sometimes less)!

Here are some ways to fit a lot of plants into a balcony garden or other small outdoor space:

- Include large pots that can handle multiple plants (we like these stylish, self-watering ceramic pots).
- Install shelves for smaller plants such as herbs and other annuals.
- Affix chicken wire to your railing to grow vines or other climbing plants.
- Hang pots from the roof of your space, if possible (here's a great DIY on creating a vertical strawberry planter).
- Put plant hangers on railing.
- Mix edibles and ornamental plants in containers to conserve space.

8. CREATING GARDENS FOR PEACE OF MIND

By now, most of us know that gardens are good for our mental health. But while saying we'll spend more time in our gardens is one thing, doing it is a different story. That's why gardeners are becoming more intentional about what elements they add to their gardens, carefully selecting pieces that will draw them in.

- Get sentimental. If there's a plant that evokes fond memories of a loved one, find a place for it.
- Include colors that make you feel good. Decide which colors you do and do not want and keep that in mind as you select plants.
- Create sensory connections:
 - Include scented plants near spaces where you frequently spend time.
 - Incorporate plants with soft textures near pathways so they brush up against you as you walk through your garden.
 - Add the sound of water or plants such as ornamental grasses that make a lovely rustling sound in a breeze.

9. AMPLIFYING COLOR WITH BICOLOR PLANTS

Nurseries and plant sellers are always keeping an eye on what colors people are gravitating towards. More recently, it's bicolor flowers that are stealing the spotlight.

Here are a couple ideas for using them:

- Fill an entire garden bed with a bicolor plant. This keeps it simple but still gives you the benefits of multiple colors.
- Mix and match. Choose a bicolor plant, such as Supertunia Mini Vista® Violet Star, then choose neighboring plants of each color.
- Think beyond flowers and include bicolor foliage too. Plant varieties such as ColorBlaze® Royale Apple Brandy with flowers or other foliage in corresponding colors.

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10. GETTING THE MOST OUT OF EACH SEASON

With the increased interest in home improvement, people are starting to look to their gardens for enjoyment not only in spring and summer, but all year. In his book, *A Year at Brandywine Cottage*, David Culp muses on the seasons, writing, “Plants are a living medium. They grow, they bloom, they die, and that gives each season a different dimension.”

Several ways to soak in the seasons in your garden:

- Keep a nature journal and document your observations. This is a good practice in mindfulness, but it will also prove to be a helpful reference next year.
- Pick one shrub or tree in your garden to observe and even photograph regularly. Your attention will make you more in tune with your plants’ needs.
- Change the way you approach at least one garden task. For example, if you dread deadheading in fall, leave the spent blooms on your plant a little longer than usual. Notice how it serves wildlife. A different perspective may change the way you view this task.

can't wait to walk down the aisle



E&I 2021 REPORT

The E&I report can be found in the Newsletter in the members only section of the TGOA website.



Congratulations to the 2021 photography winners of the Gardeners of Greater Akron. The photo to the left is by David Rich.

DON'T FORGET!

Shop Amazon Smile!

This is an easy way to support the TGOA every time you make an Amazon purchase. Click the link below to set up Smile on your Amazon account.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/15-0592456>

Clubs! Send us your newsletters!

If your club sends out a monthly or bi-monthly newsletter, send it to the TGOA.

You can send it to the TGOA at toga.org@gmail.com.

This helps us stay up to date with the happenings in your club and sometimes you have great information that we want to share with everyone in The Gardeners Gazette. Make a note!



Thank goodness my seed catalogs finally arrived. I almost starting cleaning the house.