

# INTRODUCTION



**Over the years,** I've written more books about gardening than I have fingers to count. And each one was “the berries” for folks who wanted their little piece of paradise to be clean, green, and blooming to beat the band—but who didn't want to do a lot of work.

Well, in the time since my very first book was published, three things have happened. The first is that I've grown older and wiser. The second—judging from the mountains of mail I get—is that there are more would-be gardeners out there now than ever before (but even more who never plant anything at all because they don't have a “green thumb”!) And finally, developments in technology, plant breeding, and soil science have made it easier and faster to grow and maintain a glorious green scene. So I thought, why not put all of the stuff I've learned over the years, including my famous time- and labor-saving tips, tricks, and tonics, into one big book? That way, everyone could benefit—even folks whose thumbs are anything but green.



Of course, wanting to have a lush lawn and glorious gardens without spending a lot of time and effort is nothing new. In fact, it's as old as the hills. In **Grandma's Grow-How**—one of the fantastic features in this book—you'll get some of my Grandma Putt's favorite nuggets of wisdom, along with her handy helpers for growing stronger, healthier plants with no muss and no fuss. Want a sneak preview? Grandma

attracted beneficial insects by the bucketful—and repelled some of the most destructive insects on the planet simply by planting plenty of dill.



My **Quick Fix** pointers show you fast, fun, and foolproof ways to prevent pest and disease problems, speed up plant growth, make fruits and vegetables ripen more quickly—and cut the time it takes to do routine chores like mowing your lawn. For instance, did you know that tomatoes will ripen as much as two weeks earlier if you simply lay aluminum foil on the ground under the plants? Amazing, but true!



In **Take 2**, I share dozens of tips for turning would-be trash into garden-variety treasures, ranging from plant foods to pest-control aids and seed-starting pots to sprinkler testers. You'll learn how to deliver deep-down moisture to plants without the hassle (and expense) of installing a fancy maze of pipes and cables. Hint: Start saving your empty coffee cans!



And **Help!** is just what the title implies: letters from folks like you asking for—and getting—my best advice on solving perplexing problems of all kinds. You'll get the skinny on topics like grass seed that's too pooped to participate, healthy plants that have lost their luster, and newly planted tulip bulbs that are missing in action.



Sprinkled throughout these pages you'll see **callouts**—tiny tidbits of terrific advice that'll save you tons of time and effort in every part of your yard. Just to whet your appetite, would you believe that beating a tree in early spring with a rolled-up newspaper stimulates sap flow, which will jump-start great growth? It's true!

Finally (of course!), you'll find a whole stack of my world-famous tonics made from common products found in your local supermarket or kitchen cabinets. With these DIY fixers, you'll be able to fend off pesky pests and dastardly diseases in a jiffy, plus add lots of get-up-and-grow power to all the plants in your yard.

So what are you waiting for? There's no green thumb required to grow the greenest grass, prettiest flowers, and tastiest fruits and vegetables on your side of the fence!