

How to Prepare a Spring Garden on a Budget



1. **Start with a budget.** If you know what your budget allowance for the garden is from the very beginning, you will have something to stick to and if there is anything left over, you can reward yourself with something extra. If you don't have a budget, you will probably overspend, so don't skip this essential step.
2. **Create a garden plan on paper.** In the same way that a shopping list helps you to curtail overspending in the store, a garden plan helps you to avoid over-purchasing of whims when you go to the garden center. Draw in the [flowers](#), the vegetables, the ornamentals, the decorations, etc. that you'd like in your garden this year, in their exact places. This plan will guide you on buying "just enough" and no more. And don't forget to take account of plants that you're already growing yourself.
3. **Use your own seed.** Keep [seeds](#) back from the previous season from flowers and vegetables that grew in your garden. Allow the seeds to dry (to prevent mildew over winter) and place in separate bags, well labeled. Store somewhere that is warm and dry over winter. As spring gets closer, plant the seeds in seedling trays and keep indoors near a window that gets a lot of sunshine. Water and tend to them regularly and you will get a head start on the new season's plantings.
4. **Keep an eye on garden sales in catalogs.** When the sales are on, this is an excellent time to buy the garden sale items in bulk. Naturally, only buy what you will use but have an eye for a good bargain, including for updating/replacing, and so forth of new garden tools, hoses, netting, and other essentials.
5. **Strike cuttings.** If you fancy the plants that are growing in someone else's garden, ask if you can take cuttings from them to strike your own. Many gardeners are very pleased to be asked this and will let you collect a few cuttings.
6. **Wait until frost season has cleared.** Once the likelihood of frost has cleared, take the seedlings outdoors and continue watering them in their trays. Do this for a week or two, to help them transition from the indoor environment to the outdoor one.
 - The budget-conscious gardener won't rush this step, otherwise you'll have to find more [seedlings](#) to replace the ones you've lost.
 - Read [How to grow seedlings](#), [How to thin out seedlings](#) and [How to keep birds off your seedlings](#) for more ideas.
7. **Buy plants that have been reduced due to lack of adequate attention or overstocking.** In some garden centers, there will be a section of plants that haven't been adequately cared for, or that have not been selling as well as the store owner would like, going for a song. If you've a green thumb and you can identify the likelihood of successfully salvaging any of the poorer plants back to health, these finds can make incredible [bargains](#).
8. **Make your own garden decorations.** Rather than buying decorative items for the garden, recycle and reuse household items to create new and amazing garden sculptures, feature pieces, water features, etc. Be as imaginative as you'd like and rope the kids in to help too. They can have great fun making a dinosaur garden with their toys, a fairy garden with their fairies, an animal garden for their pets, etc.
9. **Keep it simple.** A budget conscious garden is a simple one that is pretty, effective, useful, and pleasant all at once. If you can't afford a [greenhouse](#) to keep tropical flowers, don't aim for that. Visit the local gardens instead and see theirs and think about how much extra work is involved anyway! And there is nothing more appealing than a well-weeded, well-tended garden, whatever your budget.