

A YARDEN NEWSLETTER

SOW STRANGE GARDENS

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DISCOVERING
HIDDEN HARVESTS

UPCYCLING
TRASH TO TREASURE

ALCHEMY IN THE GARDEN
BLACK GOLD

SOW WHAT & WHEN
JANUARY EDITION

LET'S GROW TOGETHER





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SOW STRANGE

a brief bio



I was nurtured by a loving family who taught me how to stay grounded while daring to fly. My creative journey has led me through poetry, open mics, theatre, and music — each experience shaping my voice as a writer, vocalist, and producer. Now rooted here, I continue to grow — in my garden, my art, and my sound — creating from a place of curiosity, gratitude, and flow. Gardening is a privilege and a way of life. Being a gardener changes how you view the world and life around you in many wonderful ways.

**“FROM SOIL TO SONG —
ALWAYS CREATING,
ALWAYS BECOMING.”**

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Why Upcycling Works



04



UPCYCLING EVERYDAY ITEMS INTO GARDEN CONTAINERS ADDS UNIQUE STYLE, AND MAKES SMALL- SPACE GARDENING BOTH CREATIVE AND PRACTICAL.

Almost anything can become a planter when you start looking at everyday objects with a gardener's eye. Tin cans, juice jugs, takeout containers, old mugs, even a broken colander can transform into charming, functional homes for herbs, greens, or flowers. Suddenly, what once looked like trash becomes a tiny garden waiting to happen.

Turning these cast-off items into real planters is surprisingly simple: add drainage, fill with a lightweight potting mix, choose a fast-growing plant, and—if you're feeling artsy—dress it up with a bit of twine or paint. With just a few minutes of effort, a forgotten container becomes a miniature ecosystem full of life and possibility.

The magic truly happens when you match the right plant to the right container. Shallow bowls are perfect for microgreens, tall bottles love green onions and mint, wide cans can handle lettuce or dwarf tomatoes, and leaky colanders are practically made for strawberries and lavender. Each reused vessel has its own personality—and its own perfect plant partner.

Caring for upcycled planters is easy, too: use light soil, check drainage often, water gently, and rotate your plants so they grow strong and balanced. And as you go about your week, try this challenge: before throwing anything away, ask yourself—could this grow something?





SOIL ALCHEMY

TURNING KITCHEN SCRAPS *into* GARDEN GOLD

Many people avoid composting because of a few stubborn myths—but here's the truth: compost doesn't have to smell bad, you don't need a giant backyard bin, and even if you don't add worms, they'll show up on their own when the conditions are right. Once you learn how simple composting can be, it starts to feel less like a chore and more like a secret superpower for your garden.

Think of composting as a kind of soil alchemy—a transformation powered by everyday ingredients. "Greens" like coffee grounds and veggie scraps mix with "browns" such as shredded paper, cardboard, and dry leaves. Add air, a little moisture, and millions of invisible microbes, and you've got a living recipe that turns kitchen waste into plant gold.

SOMETHING TO SOMETHING

And the best part? You don't need a traditional compost bin to do it. Blender composting lets you turn scraps into a nutrient-rich slurry in minutes—just blend, bury, and let the microbes take over. For container gardeners, a simple trench on one side of your pot becomes a hidden compost zone. Or you can try composting in place: dig a hole, layer scraps with browns, cover, and let nature work quietly underground.

COMPOST ISN'T COMPLICATED.

Each method is fast, clean, and surprisingly low-effort, making composting accessible whether you garden on a balcony, in a backyard, or even indoors. The process feels almost magical—watching waste disappear and seeing plants respond with richer leaves, better growth, and deeper color.

If you're ready to try it, here's your five-minute plan: save today's scraps, pick one method, do it within 24 hours, and then keep an eye on your plants. You might find yourself hooked on this small act of transformation—and wondering what other everyday magic your garden has been hiding.





What Even Is Soil Alchemy?

Soil alchemy is the quiet magic happening beneath your feet—an ancient, natural process that turns everyday scraps into rich, life-giving soil. For urban gardeners, it's a game-changer. Even if you're growing on a balcony or windowsill, you can harness this transformation using ingredients already in your home. Your morning coffee grounds, yesterday's tea bag, the ends of chopped veggies—these “greens” are packed with nitrogen, the fuel plants crave.

SOIL ALCHEMY IS THE ART OF TURNING EVERYDAY SCRAPS INTO LIVING GOLD—PROOF THAT EVEN THE SMALLEST SPACES CAN GROW MAGIC WHEN WE TRUST NATURE'S QUIET WORK.



But greens alone aren't enough; they need their partner in decomposition. Enter the “browns”—shredded paper, cardboard packaging, dead leaves swept from the curb. These carbon-rich materials balance the mix, prevent odors, and give microbes space to breathe. Add just a touch of moisture and airflow, and suddenly your kitchen waste becomes the raw material for something powerful.

The real heroes are the microbes—tiny, invisible workers ready to break everything down without a paycheck or complaint. They thrive when greens, browns, air, and moisture come together in harmony, creating a warm, living environment that quietly builds better soil. The more you understand this hidden ecosystem, the more you'll realize that soil alchemy isn't just composting—it's a doorway into deeper, more resilient urban gardening. Want to unlock the next level? Your balcony plants definitely do.



Today, save just one cup of kitchen scraps—coffee grounds, tea bags, or veggie peels. Pair it with a handful of “browns” like shredded paper or cardboard.

Choose ONE spot (a pot, a balcony container, or a small hole in the yard) and bury the mix. Then check back in 7 days and see the quiet magic at work.

Your mission: Prove to yourself that composting doesn't require space, tools, or experience—just one tiny act of transformation.

YARDEN *delish*

REMEMBER TO EAT WHAT YOU GROW



GROW YOU SOME GREEN ONIONS

I live in Georgia, where summers lean heavy and the soil never stops talking. Some plants whisper. Some lecture. Green onions are the neighbor who leans over the fence with a grin and says, You ready to learn something simple that changes everything?

Home-grown green onions are one of the easiest and most versatile crops an urban gardener can grow, offering endless ways to elevate everyday meals with almost no effort. Snip them fresh to brighten eggs, salads, tacos, soups, noodles, potatoes, grains, dips, and even dumpling or omelet fillings, or blend them into a quick homemade green onion butter for instant flavor.

Best of all, they're a true zero-waste crop. Use the tops in your cooking, then replant the white bases to regrow a continuous, delicious supply right on your balcony, windowsill, or countertop.

That paragraph alone would justify their place in the garden, but green onions are sneaky overachievers. They show up humbly, pencil-thin and unassuming, then quietly become indispensable. They teach one of the best gardening lessons there is: abundance doesn't have to be complicated.



In a city where space is tight and soil is precious, green onions thrive on neglect. They do not demand raised beds or ceremonial compost rituals.

They'll grow in a cracked ceramic mug, a takeout container with holes punched in the bottom, or a narrow strip of dirt between the porch and the concrete. They grow fast, forgive missed waterings, and bounce back from overzealous harvesting like nothing happened. You can cut them down to nubs and they respond with fresh green spears, as if offended you ever doubted them.

They're also quietly medicinal, the kind of plant that doesn't brag about what it does for your body. Green onions belong to the allium family, alongside garlic and onions, and they share many of the same health-supporting compounds. They contain sulfur compounds that have antimicrobial properties, meaning they help your body fend off unwanted microbes. They're rich in vitamin C for immune support, vitamin K for bone health, and folate, which your cells use for repair and growth. Traditional medicine systems have long used green onions to support circulation, digestion, and mild detoxification. They're warming without being aggressive, stimulating without being harsh. Basically, they help your body tidy up after itself.

Growing them teaches patience without punishment. You don't have to wait months wondering if you did something wrong. Within days of planting a root end, green shoots appear, reminding you that life wants to continue if you give it half a chance. For new gardeners, especially urban ones who may feel intimidated by seed catalogs and conflicting advice, green onions are proof that you are allowed to succeed early and often.

They also teach restraint. You don't harvest the whole thing at once unless you need to. You take what you need and leave the rest. That lesson has a way of sneaking out of the garden and into the rest of your life.

And then there's the flavor of pride. Store-bought green onions are fine. Home-grown ones taste like you did something right.

If you ever feel disconnected, overwhelmed, or convinced that growing food is too hard, plant green onions. Let them remind you that growth can be straightforward, that nourishment doesn't need to be dramatic, and that some of the best teachers in the garden are the ones that keep showing up, again and again, asking very little and giving a lot. In a world obsessed with more, green onions quietly suggest better.



Did You Know? Green Onion Edition

- 1.Green onions are not a separate species. They're immature onions harvested before a bulb fully forms.
- 2.You can regrow green onions multiple times from the same base, especially if grown in soil rather than water.
- 3.The green tops contain more vitamin A than the white ends.
- 4.Green onions were cultivated in China over 2,000 years ago.
- 5.They can tolerate light frost, making them a year-round crop in much of Georgia.
- 6.Chopping green onions and letting them sit for a few minutes increases the availability of beneficial sulfur compounds.
- 7.They naturally repel some garden pests due to their scent.
- 8.Green onions grow faster in cooler temperatures than full-sized bulb onions.
- 9.They are low in calories but high in flavor, making them a favorite in traditional healing diets.
- 10.A single bunch can produce dozens of harvests over its lifetime if treated kindly.



HIDDEN HARVESTS



Growing UNDER THE RADAR

Characteristics of Edibles

- Looks ornamental – like decorative landscaping
 - Non-obvious appearance (looks like a shrub, flower, or groundcover)
- Perennial habit
 - Returns yearly, reducing visible gardening activity
- High ornamental value (HOA-friendly aesthetics)
- Highly productive
- Low maintenance
- Multiple edible parts (greens, fruits, flowers, roots, shoots)

Grows well in typical landscaping spots (borders, foundation plantings, walkway edges)

Inconspicuous Placement

A. Mix with Standard Landscaping

- Rosemary in front of hedges
- Oregano as border edging
- Daylilies around mailboxes or walkways



GROW FOOD CONFIDENTLY, BEAUTIFULLY, QUIETLY AND ABUNDANTLY.

B. Use Symmetrical, “Planned” Layouts

Structured symmetry looks intentional and not like a vegetable patch.

C. Hide Food Behind Flowers

- Blueberries behind lantana or dwarf roses
- Chives behind grasses

D. Fruit Trees as Ornamental

Dwarf fruit trees often look like landscaping trees if pruned cleanly.

E. Grow Edibles in Containers That Look Decorative

Colorful planters hide the fact that you’re growing food.



PLACEMENT IDEAS *for* EDIBLES



Front Yard

- Serviceberry tree
- Daylilies + hostas
- Society garlic accents

Side Yard

- Blueberries shaped like
ornamentals
- Rosemary hedge

Back Yard

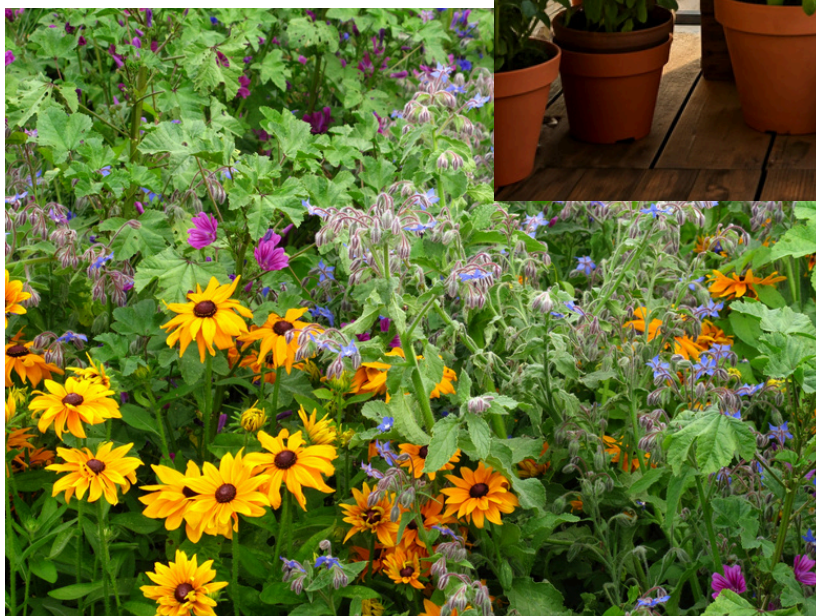
- Herbs
- Ferns for shady areas

Trellis (if allowed)

- Malabar spinach
- Hardy kiwi

YOUR GARDEN
IS YOUR
CANVAS. YOU
ARE THE
ARTIST.

CAMOUFLAGE your edibles by mixing them with classic ornamentals. Be sure to hide high-yield plants behind statement shrubs. Use color and texture to blend food plants into the landscape. Foundation beds are great for edible shrubs and you can use edible ground cover under trees. Figs trees make great accent shrubs while rosemary can be trained as low hedges and blueberries can be shaped as decorative bushes.



YARDEN TO YARDEN



PATIENCE IS A PRACTICE, NOT A PERSONALITY

Gardening teaches that patience isn't something you either have or don't. It's something you do, repeatedly. You water, you wait, you resist digging up the seed to check if it's "working." Over time, patience stops feeling passive and starts feeling like active trust.



GROWTH RARELY LOOKS IMPRESSIVE AT FIRST

Early growth is quiet, uneven, almost embarrassing. Gardening humbles your expectations and retrains your eye to notice subtle progress. It teaches that beginnings often look like nothing until suddenly they don't.

THE SOIL REMEMBERS EVERYTHING

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NOT EVERY SEED WANTS THE SAME LIGHT

Some plants wilt in full sun while others stretch desperately in the shade. Gardening reminds us that struggle isn't always about effort. Often it's about being planted in the wrong place and blaming yourself instead of changing conditions.



REST IS PART OF THE WORK

Leaving soil undisturbed feels counterproductive until you see how it rebounds. Gardening reframes rest as restoration, not laziness. Life doesn't require constant output to remain valuable. Sometimes stopping is what makes future growth possible.





SOW WHAT & WHEN

**GROW ON,
EVEN IN THE COLD**

January 

Best Seeds to Sow (outside/under cover where possible)

1. Spinach (annual) — cool-season leafy green
2. Peas (annual) — snap or snow peas
3. Carrot (annual)
4. Beet (annual)
5. Kale (annual)
6. Chard (annual)
7. Parsley (biennial/annual)
8. Strawberry (perennial) — from seed
9. Asparagus (perennial) — crowns can go in as soil warms
10. Onion (annual) — from seed or sets



3 Germination Tips

- Keep soil cool and moist, not soaked (cool-season seeds don't like heat).
- Cover seeds lightly; many need barely any soil above them.
- Use row covers or cold frames in colder snaps.

Fun Facts

- Spinach leaves are packed with iron—metabolism helpers but your body absorbs that iron better with a squeeze of lemon.



Grow on.





THE MORE YOU SOW,
THE MORE YOU SOW.

**YARDEN
WITHOUT
LIMITS**

@SOWSTRANGEGARDENS