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Wandering the Web — Gardening

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Column Editor's Note: *Wandering the Web* was originally envisioned as an annotated guide for librarians to the multitude of online resources on a particular topic for their own interest and for possible recommendation to their patrons. The idea was to find an authority on a subject and allow them to recommend and annotate a list of selected Websites on their area of expertise. **Mrs. Drost** is a local authority on gardening as well as a librarian and so, her advice on online resources was sought regarding this popular pastime. — **JM**

Gardening is a favorite past time of many. Before the internet, novice gardeners had to rely on the sometimes dubious or conflicting advice from family, friends, or neighbors. Failing that, one could gather information, usually for a fee, from gardening classes, books, and magazines. With the arrival of the internet, it is extremely easy to find absolutely everything you could ever want to know about gardening, plants, trees, and pests. Here are several Websites dedicated to gardening, landscaping, and plant, bird, and insect biology. All information is free unless mentioned.

General Gardening

Dave's Garden — <http://davesgarden.com> — **Dave's Garden** is a gardener's paradise on the Web. It offers identification guides for bugs, birds, butterflies, and plants, gardening glossaries, articles, video gardening tutorials, and freeze and frost dates for your area. It includes links to retailers, mail order catalogs, and has a classifieds section. Users can even post pictures of their gardens or communicate with other gardeners via the chat function. If you register with the site, there is a place where you can blog, journal, communicate with other members, and maintain a wish list of plants you would like to trade with others. The site is also easy to navigate.

National Gardening Association — <http://www.garden.org> — The **National Gardening Association's** Website offers national gardening news, articles, a weed library, a plant finder, a "questions and answers" section, videos, pest control advice, a seed swap, message boards, grants and awards, an "adopt-a-garden" option, newsletters, and a curriculum to teach about gardening. This is a visually appealing Website.

USDA Plants Database — <http://plants.usda.gov> — This database offers very specific information about hundreds of types of plants. Users can search for them by scientific name or common name using the provided search engine. Fact sheets about specific plants include uses, alternate names, management, status, pests/problems, description, whether

the plant is considered to be a weed, adaptation/distribution, establishment, and a photo of the plant. The site also identifies threatened and endangered species and weeds, complete with pictures.

iVillage Garden Web — <http://www.gardenweb.com> — Some of the most useful content of this site is the discussion forums (<http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums>). Forums are indexed by subject areas, title, topic, name of plant, and type of garden. They are a great place to ask a gardening question and get answers from others. In addition to the forums, the site has plenty of other resources to offer including blogs, retailer listings, garden directories, an event calendar, questions and answers, zone buddies, photo galleries, ask the experts and a "hortiplex" database.

P. Allen Smith — <http://www.pallensmith.com/home> — **P. Allen Smith** is a garden designer and the host of a public television show. His Website offers lots of information about gardening and gardening/landscape design, a plant library, how-to videos, events, recipes, and plenty of how-to projects to keep one busy.

Garden Guides — <http://www.garden-guides.com> — This is a site of do-it-yourself projects, plant information, gardening advice, garden design, and organic gardening. Find information about pests and diseases, gardening phases, and how to choose plants. The site also offers a gardening calendar, event calendar, nursery and landscaper directory, forums, and blogs.

Old Farmer's Almanac — <http://www.almanac.com/gardening> — **The Old Farmer's Almanac** provides gardening how-to advice, the best planting dates, monthly gardening tips, landscaping help, a seed swap, articles, forums, pest and insect information, weed information, and a monthly "Garden Musings" podcast.

Organic Gardening

Organic Gardening — <http://www.organicgardening.com> — Although this is the Website for the magazine *Organic Gardening*, it offers a lot of helpful information for free. There are blogs, how-to information, tips about soil and composting, a free weekly newsletter, discussions, and videos. All the information on this site pertains to organic gardening.

Gardening with Kids

Kids Gardening — <http://www.kidsgardening.org> — Sponsored by the **National Gardening Association**, this Website contains many articles with instructions and suggestions of how to get kids involved with gardening. It offers free online curriculums for educators designed to

teach kids about agriculture and gardening. Curriculum and books can also be purchased through this site. Information is also available about grants, fundraising, tips for parents, fee-based online courses, and a newsletter.

Gardening with Kids — <http://www.gardening-with-kids.com> — This Website contains many articles to help get children excited about and involved with gardening.

Local Produce

Local Harvest — <http://www.localharvest.org> — Find farmer's markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food in your area. This informative site helps you to connect with places where you can buy local produce, grass-fed meats, and many other products close to home; simply type in your zip code or city and state to find a place near you. The site also features blogs and online stores where you can buy products.

USDA Farmer's Market Finder — <http://apps.ams.usda.gov/FarmersMarkets> — This site offers a search to find local farmer's markets. This search can be qualified to include markets that accept debit/credit and places that take payment in the form of state-funded programs like food stamps.

Trees

Arbor Day Foundation — <http://www.arborday.org> — As well as promoting the planting of trees and having information about the foundation, this is a handy Website to learn about trees. The site offers identifying information, instructs one where to plant specific trees, how to prune them, which zone they should be planted in, and other interesting information about trees.

Weeds

Weed ID Guide — <http://weedid.missouri.edu/index.cfm> — This site has everything you ever wanted to know about weeds. Search for information by weed habitat, common name, or scientific name. Results show a picture, identifying information, habitat, root type, and a description. 🌿