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**A Better Weekend Gardening Experience**

**By Victor Pryles**

It's vital to start the process of having a hassle-free garden. This article gives you that first step and helps achieve some sound understanding of what you face as a weekend gardener. Our goal is to create a garden that practically takes care of itself.

Unlike my neighbor, Fred.

Fred never found a way to escape the prison of responsibilities and hard, never-ending work required by a high-maintenance garden.

If you want to avoid Fred's fate, you need to start by making a critical examination of the maintenance of your yard and garden.

Start by taking a stroll around your property and make note of how much time you take to tend to various areas.

- Which plants require the most care, right now?
- Are there areas that please you and take less care?
- Are there some areas that you love so much that no matter how much maintenance they take you'd not want to change them?
- Can you visualize any areas being scaled down in size, or that can be improved with a low-maintenance design or gardening technique?
- Where is the problem weeding area?
- Which is the most difficult mowing area of your lawn?

In my book: "The Weekend Gardener"– The Busy Persons' Guide To A Beautiful Backyard Garden, I present very specific ways to combat your problem areas as you think critically about the current maintenance problems you must take into account. Take this tour with a critical eye and a notebook. Make some notes to yourself about what you see, what you imagine, and what you are currently faced with.

As you do this preliminary overview, remember it is okay to consider what you "hate" to do in regards to gardening work. We want to get rid of these areas first and foremost.

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Everyone has a different take on this subject. Some hate mowing the lawn, others actually enjoy the exercise and like getting out in the sun. Some find weeding tedious, others will enjoy the process of grabbing weeds by the fistful and yanking them forcefully out of the ground. I have a cousin who has actually been found to wander into neighbors yards yanking the critters up (much to the surprise and cheerful appreciation of his neighbors) after he had run out of them in his own yard.

So, part of your `yard tour' is to make note of the areas that require work; how you feel about each one, and listing which are particularly time-consuming.

Once you're done, take your list and make a check mark (!) next to those items that you intend to keep no matter how much maintenance they may require. Then put a question mark (?) Next to the ones you enjoy looking at, but are nonetheless high-maintenance and take too much work. Later you will discover timesaving techniques you can surely apply to many of these problem areas.

Now plan on making your aim to eliminate those areas left UNMARKED. You'll want low maintenance ways to turn these areas into sources of pleasure, instead of drudgery. However, you can't DO anything to lessen the strain until you first SEE the problems out there in your yard. So do this tour as a first step to achieve true joy and freedom in your gardening experience.

Victor K. Pryles is the author of: "The Weekend Gardener"– The Busy Person's Guide To A Beautiful Backyard Garden. You can learn more about it at:

<http://creativepops.com/garden.index/>

He also offers

a garden-tip-a-day to his readers.

### **What's in Store for National Home Gardening Club Members?**

**By Nicky Pilkington**

The National Home Gardening Club offer many benefits to its members.

It is said to be the largest home gardening organization with paid membership. For a nominal fee, various benefits are available.

If you choose to become a member the National Home Gardening club, you will be entitled to the following perks.

1. Members can enter competitions to win free gardening products such as gardening accessories, tools, and other gardening supplies.
2. A coupon will be given to members to claim a free gardening shears.

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3. Members can also access a free trial subscription of the Gardening How-To Magazine.
4. They may be eligible to test and keep gardening tools such as pruning shears. These are some of the products tested by members in the past two issues of the Gardening How-To magazine:
  - Honda Harmony Lawn Mower
  - Miracle-Gro Garden Weed Preventer
  - Sunflower Garden
  - Cobra Head Precision Weeder and Cultivator
  - Preen 'n Green
5. Members can enjoy a free directory of public gardens, which contains information about lush gardens, arboretums, and conservatories throughout the US.
6. They can interact and talk about tips, ideas and methods with other members.
7. Members can obtain gardening and landscaping tips and plans for the completion of various gardening projects.
8. They have access to the members-only gardening website.
9. Members can also preview gardening books, gardening videos, etc.

Indeed, the for-members-only benefits are that grandiose. They are all for the gardening enthusiasts to grab.

After the 30-day trial, you can continue your membership for only \$1 per month.

Many garden-lovers think this is a small price to pay for all these privileges.

Find out more about gardening at

<http://aboutgardening.org>



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