

back to the basics

# Digital Gardening



BY DANIEL MONDAY

**H**ave you been searching for the perfect pair of gardening gloves?  
Are you stumped by the fact that your new iris didn't bloom last spring?

Or are you wondering whether your soil suits your plants?

While Jack Frost and Old Man Winter are managing your garden for you outside, it's time to use your indoor resources to keep up. So grab your keyboard and a warm cup of cocoa, then explore the Internet for help you need to make your garden its best ever this spring.

## Do Your Research

Do you have a bare spot to fill, or a part of your garden you want to rework? You'll find plenty of ideas online to get you started. Just type "garden design" into your search engine, and you're on your way. Narrow the search to your state or the Southeast. Otherwise, you might end up at [www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/design](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/design), which is not a bad address if the English style of gardening suits your fancy. If you want to organize a digital garden, designing on your computer screen before heading to the dirt, you will find a list of garden design software at [www.gardeninglaunchpad.com/GS.html](http://www.gardeninglaunchpad.com/GS.html).

The Web is also a great place to learn about new plants you can use to complete your new vision. We're trying to do our part here at *Carolina Gardener*. If you haven't already, visit [www.carolinagardener.com](http://www.carolinagardener.com) and investigate our new plant



directory. It is designed to tell you all you need to know about more than 10,000 plants and includes information and growing tips from experts like Georgia's own Michael Dirr and Allan Armitage.

And don't forget *Carolina Gardener's* collection of "Garden Talk" questions and answers is a great place to start. We've been answering gardening questions from readers for years. You might find the answer to your question in our archive. Pay a visit to [www.carolinagardener.com/gardentalk](http://www.carolinagardener.com/gardentalk) and see if you can find a solution to your problem from someone else who faced the same challenge.


Sites of special interest to Carolina gardeners are maintained by the state cooperative extension programs. North Carolina's site has a wealth of information on all aspects of gardening, including nurturing backyard wildlife. ([www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/wild/wildlife/backyard/index.html](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/wild/wildlife/backyard/index.html)) In South Carolina, the experts at Clemson University produce useful and free information at <http://hgic.clemson.edu>.

## Shop and Talk

Once you've figured out what you're going to do, you can find the tools, plants and supplies you'll need to tackle all those new gardening assignments right at your fingertips. *Carolina Gardener* has relationships with many great vendors around the area, and their information can be found on the Resources page at [www.carolinagardener.com](http://www.carolinagardener.com).

The Internet has also become a great resource for finding a community of gardeners as excited about their projects as you are. From message boards with general topics to specific forums covering topics such as raising orchids or crossing daylilies, these online communities are a great way to exchange ideas and advice, make new friends and learn from other gardeners' experiences.

After joining a few of these online discussions, you might even be inspired to create your own blog, a type of online journal where you share your personal gardening activities and experiences with other gardening enthusiasts, all through the computer. There are a number of sites that can help you get started with this project, including [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com) or [www.blog.com](http://www.blog.com).

There's a whole world of gardening to explore online. Whether you're just starting out, or you're an experienced gardener, you'll find plenty to keep you busy. Start digging online, and you'll find a world of fun. 

*Daniel Monday created and maintains the Carolina Gardener Web site. He is an advertising sales associate with the magazine.*

## web sites



- **NC Cooperative Extension**  
[www.ces.ncsu.edu](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu)
- **SC Cooperative Extension**  
[www.clemson.edu/extension](http://www.clemson.edu/extension)
- **VA Cooperative Extension**  
[www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu)
- **GA Cooperative Extension**  
[www.caes.uga.edu/extension](http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension)
- **FL Cooperative Extension**  
<http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu>
- **Garden Designer**  
[www.gardendesigner.com](http://www.gardendesigner.com)
- **BBC Online Gardening**  
[www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/design](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/design)
- **Idea Spectrum Landscape Design Software**  
[www.ideaspectrum.com](http://www.ideaspectrum.com)
- **Garden Design Online**  
[www.gardendesignonline.com](http://www.gardendesignonline.com)
- **Garden Web**  
[www.gardenweb.com](http://www.gardenweb.com)
- **National Gardening Association**  
[www.garden.org](http://www.garden.org)
- **I Can Garden**  
[www.icangarden.com](http://www.icangarden.com)
- **The Gardener's Handbook**  
[www.gardenresourcesworld.com](http://www.gardenresourcesworld.com)
- **Gardening Launchpad**  
<http://gardeninglaunchpad.com>
- **Orchid Talk**  
[www.orchidtalk.com](http://www.orchidtalk.com)
- **Daylily Forum**  
[www.gardenstew.com](http://www.gardenstew.com)
- **General Gardening Forum**  
<http://boards.hgtv.com>
- **Gardening Forums and Message Boards**  
[www.big-boards.com/kw/gardening](http://www.big-boards.com/kw/gardening)