

## HOME-GARDEN

# Gardening Central Mass.: In 2025, resolve to set new goals for your gardening

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If you are one of the millions of people who make New Year's resolutions, I'm challenging you to put a new spin on it this year and set gardening resolutions. I often fall victim to making two or three resolutions, religiously following them for a few months and then forgetting about them. But since gardening already makes me so happy, *gardening resolutions* may just stick. Here are six resolutions at the top of my list that might give you some ideas if you want to set gardening resolutions as well. The trick will be setting realistic goals you can keep.

This year, I am going to spend at least 15 minutes in my garden three weeknights a week. Rather than joining a gym, I'll meet my exercise goals by gardening! I find that when I come home and spend just a few minutes weeding a small part of my garden, planting a few new plants, or sowing seeds, I'm able to unwind from my workday. Also, this consistency in the garden will help me keep on top of tasks so they don't become overwhelming.

Gardening is also a great time to practice mindfulness and meditation, another popular resolution. One corner of my yard is shady and has natural moss. Rather than fight the moss, I created a small moss garden. I found that weeding grass and other unwanted plants from the moss gives me quiet time to focus. When I am particularly frustrated with something or trying to solve a problem, this is the corner of my yard to which I gravitate, so I will try to be more intentional about reflection during my weeding sessions in the moss garden.

Resolutions don't always have to be about yourself. That's why this year I'm also resolving to create habitat for wildlife in my home garden. Even a very small garden can attract and support beneficial insects. If you choose to do this as well, use a mixture of nectar and host plants, make sure that you have different sized plants to create layers, and avoid pesticides.

Some resolutions made today can have long term benefits for your garden, like resolving to stay on top of plant health care. This may sound like something that should be left to the professionals, but the average homeowner can learn about the plants in their yard and the common pests and diseases that might affect them. My neighbor has a large beech tree that is suffering from beech leaf disease. Even though he didn't know what was wrong with his tree, he noticed that something was different with the leaves and asked my arborist husband for help. This year, I'm resolving to set up a regular scouting schedule that I will mark on my calendar to look for pests and diseases on plants. Different pests and diseases will be present at different times of the year, so it is important to be consistent.

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When I was cleaning up my potting bench at the end of the 2024 growing season, I found many seed packets that were either unopened or still had many seeds. I also have seeds that I have collected over the years from my vegetable plants and perennials. As seeds age, the viability declines, meaning the percentage of seeds that germinate will reduce each year, so it isn't a good practice to hold onto seeds too long. My seed resolution for 2025 is to plant the seeds I've been hoarding before buying new ones.

I am dedicated to gardening sustainably, so my final resolution is to make at least one change that allows me to garden even more sustainably. I might do something like make the switch to organic potting soil, upgrade a gas-powered gardening tool over to an electric-powered tool, or plant native ground covers to reduce the need to mulch.

I'm fortunate to find inspiration for my gardening resolutions not only at home, but also at work at New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill. If you're having trouble sticking to your gardening resolutions or need some new ideas, visit us in Boylston, MA or follow us on social media @NewEnglandBG. Here's to a successful year of gardening in 2025!

*Gardening Central Mass. is written by the team at New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill. Located on 200 acres in Boylston, New England Botanic Garden creates experiences with plants that inspire people and improve the world. Learn more at [www.nebg.org](http://www.nebg.org). The column is published on the third Sunday of the month, but is running a week late this month because of an editor's error.*

