

A young child with curly hair, wearing a blue dress over a dark long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, stands in a lush garden. The child is holding a single pink rose. The garden is filled with tall green plants, possibly irises, and various other flowers in shades of orange, red, and purple. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

# garden for life

## *an impassioned approach*

At the very core of organic gardening are the words of Lady Eve Balfour (1942):  
***‘The health of soil, plant, animal and man is one and indivisible’.***

*The success of a garden depends as much on a cohesive design as it does with an effective and prudent garden care plan. Just as a garden design responds to functionality, aesthetic form and the garden owners’ requirements, the management of the garden should not only respect the integrity of the layout but also deliver the best possible outcome for the garden space.*

As horticulturists we have a responsibility to deliver the most sustainable and effective way of managing a garden owner’s environment. Organic gardening is the most successful way of ensuring a garden’s health and the garden owners’ wellbeing. Through being active participants in the natural systems that are occurring right at our doorstep, we ensure a garden’s longevity and reduce our impact on the environment.

By understanding and appreciating the importance of caring for plants naturally, we protect the earth, nurture the soil and give plants the healthiest opportunity for survival. As a result of a better interaction with plant life, our lifestyle and health are improved. Without healthy plants and soil, there would be no ecosystem from which we depend upon for survival. Nurturing the earth as best as we possibly can is crucial to our wellbeing.

Through organic gardening, in particular nurturing and supporting a healthy soil profile, the best possible situation exists for plant health, microclimate creation and opportunities for biodiversity. A garden can be a healthy ecosystem that supports birds, insects and other important species. Through implementing an organic management plan that focuses on nurturing soil, optimum plant health and supporting natural systems, a garden can become a safe haven brimming with life and energy.

Organic gardening owes very much to the self-sufficient techniques and foresight of the Ancient Egyptians. Through careful organic management of soil with natural manures, leaf litter, fragments of tree bark and organic material, the necessary minerals were provided to feed and create a healthy soil profile. Soil was nurtured and in turn could support the growing of fruit trees, vegetables, flowers and shade trees; and in combination with water, cleverly irrigated through narrow channels, these all eventually became part of the renowned paradise gardens. Water featured prominently, and used sparingly through efficient irrigation systems, allowed fruitful and rewarding edible and ornamental plants, herbs and flowers in arid conditions. Ponds were also often part of a balanced and harmonious garden design.

To ensure a natural flourishing garden for generations to come, garden management needs to move beyond ensuring a garden looks neat. It must work beyond appearances. It is the relationship with nature, and your interaction with its continuing cycles by being an active participant rather than a static observer, through which life is created and supported. The garden becomes a harmonious space to enjoy.

**Tom Remfry**

*Tom’s Secret Garden*

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