

Front Lines

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New Gardeners' Call For Help

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Hort media veteran Sara Tambascio also pens a garden blog, How to Nature. She has seen quite a few (few thousands, maybe) new gardeners out there who are ready and willing to take up the trowel, but just aren't sure what to do next. She's shared some thoughts on this #newgardener trend and how she believes you're set to become their garden hero.

Gardens are more than just gardens this summer. They make us feel like we're doing something, when many of us feel helpless. They are therapy. This is the summer when thousands of people are turning to nature and will experience their own first gardens.

Let's help them and their gardens succeed. Let me tell you what I've seen on social media this spring. I've seen beauty and craft bloggers start their first gardens. I've seen new social media accounts pop up with usernames like "abbysvictorygarden" and "quarantinegarden." More than once, I've seen the words, "I have no idea what I'm doing" posted alongside a photo of a pristine new pair of gardening gloves and a bag of soil. They know they don't have all the information they need, but they're not lacking the spirit needed to succeed.

The last time I checked, Instagram had 68,000 posts tagged #newgarden. More than 26,000 posts are tagged #firsttimegardener. These are people who came to a hobby that feels safe when everything else feels broken. They're telling all their friends about their experience in the garden. Let's help them earn their green thumbs.

If there was ever a summer to sort out your social media, this is it. Post those little production tips that can be blind spots for new gardeners. Exactly how to pinch, prune and thin. Acclimating seedlings. Irrigation. How to pollinate a zucchini plant. Remind veggie gardeners to also plant some flowers to attract pollinators. Direct them to quality content, even if it's not your own.

But maybe more importantly, get in there and answer new gardeners' questions directly. People are asking for help and they're not always finding it. Go to them instead of waiting for them to come to you.

Search social media, especially Instagram, for #firsttimegardener, #firstgarden, #quarantinegarden and #victorygarden. Search for #ohiogarden, #michigangarden or wherever you are if you want to help someone closer to home. Offer encouragement to one person. Answer one question. We need your expertise.

Whoever on staff usually handles a garden center's social media could lead the way, either responding to these new gardener queries themselves or finding someone on the team with the needed information. It would really take just

minutes to meaningfully help a new gardener.

They're ready. They're here. Be there for these new gardeners now and they'll be there for you for a lifetime. **GP**