



# Organic Greenhouse Gardening:

YOUR BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO GROWING NATURALLY

There's a special kind of satisfaction that comes from stepping into your own greenhouse, knowing every plant inside has been nurtured naturally—no synthetic fertilizers, no harsh chemicals, just good old-fashioned soil, sunshine, and your care. That's the heart of organic greenhouse gardening!

If you're new to this, the idea of "going organic" might feel a bit daunting. You might wonder, "What products are truly safe? How do I even begin to control pests? Is it really possible to grow a thriving greenhouse garden without chemicals?" The short answer? Absolutely! And we're here to walk you through exactly how.

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## What Is Organic Greenhouse Gardening?

Simply put, it's about growing plants in your greenhouse in a way that mimics nature itself. This means using organic seeds, rich compost, natural fertilizers, and pest control methods that steer clear of synthetic chemicals. The big goal is to create a self-sustaining ecosystem right inside your greenhouse, working with nature instead of against it.

## Your Step-by-Step Journey to an Organic Greenhouse

### STEP 1

#### Start Smart with Organic Seeds or Seedlings

Your organic adventure truly begins with your seeds. Not all seeds are created equal; some might be treated with fungicides or coated in synthetic materials that just don't fit into organic gardening.

#### Look for Labels Like These:

- USDA Organic
- Untreated or non-GMO
- Certified organic from trusted sources like High Mowing, Johnny's Selected Seeds, or Baker Creek

**Pro Tip:** If you're buying young plants (transplants), always double-check that they weren't started with chemical fertilizers or sprays. When in doubt, growing your own from seed gives you complete control from the very beginning.

## STEP 2

### Choose the Right Foundation - Your Soil

Healthy soil is the bedrock of any successful organic greenhouse. Since you'll likely be growing in raised beds, containers, or trays, the soil you pick is absolutely everything.

#### What to Use:

- Organic potting mix or seed-starting mix
- Compost-rich blends
- Worm castings for an extra nutrient boost
- Coconut coir or peat moss to help with moisture control
- Perlite or vermiculite for excellent drainage

**What to Avoid:** Any soil that lists synthetic fertilizers or those tricky "moisture crystals"—they usually contain polymers that aren't organic.

## STEP 3

### Feed Your Plants the Natural Way

Without synthetic fertilizers, your plants will rely on good, natural nutrition. The good news? There are tons of fantastic organic options that gently feed your plants and actually improve your soil's health over time.

#### Organic Fertilizers to Consider:

- Fish emulsion (it's wonderful for leafy greens!)
- Kelp or seaweed extract (great for boosting plant resilience)
- Compost tea (you can make your own or buy it!)
- Alfalfa meal, bone meal, or blood meal (just remember to read labels for animal-derived sources)
- Worm castings (a super gentle, steady source of nutrients)

**Frequency Tip:** Organic fertilizers release nutrients slowly, so you'll apply them more often than synthetic ones. But the payoff is steadier, longer-lasting results!



## STEP 4

### Tackle Pests the Organic Way

Yes, even in your cozy greenhouse, little bugs may find their way in. But don't worry, you absolutely don't need harsh chemicals to deal with them. The secret is to stay observant and be proactive.

#### Common Organic Pest Strategies:

- **Neem oil:** A natural, non-toxic spray that helps deter most pests.
- **Insecticidal soap:** Perfect for aphids, whiteflies, and spider mites.
- **Sticky traps:** Great for catching flying pests like fungus gnats or whiteflies.
- **Beneficial insects:** Introduce the good guys! Ladybugs, lacewings, and parasitic wasps can be your allies.
- **Diatomaceous earth:** This natural powder dehydrates soft-bodied insects (just remember to use it dry, away from watering zones).

**The Key:** Consistency! Inspect your plants regularly, especially the undersides of leaves, and act quickly if something seems off.



## STEP 5

### Naturally Manage Diseases

Fungal diseases, mildew, and rot can sometimes sneak into even the cleanest greenhouses. But remember, prevention is more than half the battle. I personally never deal with mold, and I truly believe it's because of my ventilation practices and giving my plants enough space for good airflow.

#### Tips for Organic Disease Control:

- **Good airflow:** Use vents or fans to keep the air moving and prevent it from becoming stagnant.
- **Water early in the day:** This gives your plants time to dry before nightfall.
- **Bottom-water seedlings:** This helps reduce excess moisture on their leaves.
- **Remove infected leaves immediately:** And whatever you do, don't compost diseased material.
- **Use natural sprays:** Options like copper soap (look for OMRI-listed) or a simple baking soda-water mixture can help with early mildew control.

**When in Doubt:** Rotate your crops seasonally. It keeps your soil healthier and reduces the chance of diseases building up in one spot.





## STEP 6

### Welcome Pollinators (Yes, Even Indoors!)

In a closed environment like a greenhouse, hand-pollination or actively encouraging pollinators can make a huge difference, especially for fruiting plants like tomatoes, cucumbers, or peppers.

#### Ways You Can Help:

- Prop open your doors on warm days to invite in those helpful pollinators.
- Grow flowering herbs like basil, dill, or nasturtiums nearby.
- Use a soft brush or cotton swab to gently hand-pollinate blossoms.
- Add a fan to simulate wind, which helps with pollen transfer.

**Don't Forget:** Pollination is often overlooked in greenhouses, but it's absolutely essential if you want real harvests from all your organic hard work. (Though I personally don't take extra steps for pollination and never have any issues!)

## STEP 7

### Embrace Composting

Being an organic gardener means reducing waste and giving back to your soil, and composting is the perfect way to do both. If you have the space, consider keeping a compost pile or bin nearby for plant scraps, weeds, and kitchen waste. Even a small worm bin inside your greenhouse can turn those scraps into gardening gold for your soil!

Organic greenhouse gardening isn't about striving for perfection. It's about being intentional. It's a beautiful way of gardening that shows respect for the soil, your plants, and the people who enjoy the food from your garden—including you! Just start where you are. Learn as you go. And please, don't be afraid to make a few mistakes—because every season brings new growth, not just in your garden, but in you too.

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