

Ricky's Gardening Tips and Tricks and Home Horticulture

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Ricky's Gardening Tips and Tricks and Home Horticulture is an online newsletter designed to provide citizens of Allen County and northeastern Indiana with up-to-date information about Horticulture and home issues, written in a lighthearted style! To subscribe, send an email to kemeryr7@frontier.com.

Dealing with Cold Weather

The National Weather Service is predicting a colder than average winter for our area this season. It's important for folks to realize that certain plants are more sensitive to winter cold and harsh winds than others. Boxwood, rhododendrons, some hydrangeas, Japanese Maples, and arborvitae are more sensitive to harsh conditions.

Most of the time, it is harsh winds in addition to the cold that can damage plants. The winds remove moisture from evergreen leaves. This is referred to as desiccation.

Often it is necessary to wrap the plants with some material to protect against cold and desiccation. The good news is that some garden outlets are offering better options nowadays to wrap plants. Thermal "blankets" are available from some catalog sources such as Gardeners Supply. For smaller plants, make a cage using hardware cloth or chicken wire to place around the plant. Use dry leaves to place around the plant - filling the space. This will protect the plant somewhat from cold and desiccating winds. Protecting the plants in this way could mean the difference from a plant surviving the winter - or not.

Larger plants can be wrapped with burlap to protect against winter wind desiccation. Arborvitae, smaller cut leaf Japanese maple, taller boxwood, and hydrangeas can be protected using this method.

If you are really in a bind, use snow piled around a smaller plant to protect it. The last I heard, there is no fee to use snow. Just make sure the snow contains no de-icing salts. Those can damage or kill plants.

Cardboard – especially heavy grade cardboard - may also be used to place around plants to protect them - especially from the wind.

Styrofoam is also useful for winter plant protection – especially for outdoor planters containing decorative shrubs or perennials. The root system of the plant is in jeopardy in this case. Make a protective cage to fit around the container. Fill and spaces with dry leaves. Generally, roots will take a hit from the cold when temperatures reach below 10 degrees.

Make sure to remove your winter protection when temperatures in the spring are reliably above freezing.

Shrub roses generally are more cold hardy than the previously mentioned plants. Even if the plants are damaged by winter cold and wind – they rarely die. Most of the time, just cut back the roses to live growth in the spring. They will recover nicely by June. Some folks are confused by the difference between the old-fashioned hybrid tea roses and shrub roses.

Hybrid teas need more extensive winter protection in our area. Think of them as a tender perennial. Shrub roses – well they are deciduous shrubs much more adapted to our area.

Sunflowers



Figure 1 Chianti Sunflower

Evidence suggests that sunflowers were cultivated at least 2000 years ago in present-day Arizona and New Mexico by American Indians. Sunflowers served multiple uses such as putting ground seeds into flour for cakes, eating the seeds as a snack, and using the oil for making bread. Sunflower stalks were also used to build houses and roofs and for ceremonial, medical, and textile purposes. Around 1500, sunflowers were taken to Europe by Spanish explorers where they were mainly planted for ornamental purposes, but were also developed for medicinal uses. Following this in the 18th century, sunflowers became a hugely popular cultivated plant and its oil started to be commercially manufactured by 1830.

By the early 19th century, Russian farmers had grown more than 2 million acres of sunflowers, and had also identified one type for oil production, and one for direct human consumption. The Russian sunflower seed made its way into the United States by late in the 19th century.



Figure 3 Lemon Queen

Sunflower oil was in high demand throughout Canada and the U.S., resulting in acreage spread and production and these lovely flowers were hybridized for disease resistance and additional oil enhancement. Further request for sunflower oil came from Europe as the Russians could no longer supply the growing demand, therefore increasing U.S. acreage to more than 5 million acres. Sunflower production in the U.S. is primarily located in the northern plains states of north and south Dakota.



Figure 2 Ring Of Fire

- Heliotropism is the name of the behavior for sunflowers turning to face the sun.
- The sunflower is the official flower for the U.S. state of Kansas and is the national flower of Russia.

Sources

<http://www.sunflowernsa.com/all-about/history/>

<http://www.theflowerexpert.com/content/mostpopularflowers/morepopularflowers/sunflo>

I prefer the smaller multi- flowered sunflowers over the very tall (fewer or just one huge flower) cultivars such as 'Russian Giant' and 'Skyscraper'. Some of my favorites are pictured.



Figure 4 Soraya



Figure 5 Van Gogh Mix

Mexican Sunflowers (*Tithonia rotundifolia*) are not true sunflowers (the genus *Helianthus*) at all. *Tithonia* is native to Mexico and Central America and is commonly found along roadsides in the high mountains of central Mexico.



The genus *Tithonia* is named for Tithonus, a young man much loved by Aurora, the dawn-goddess. The species name *rotundifolia*, describes the round leaves of this plant.

One common name, Golden Flower of the Aztecs, describes how long this plant has been a part of the Mexican and South American landscape. In our area, Mexican sunflower is an annual; growing up to 4-6 feet in height.

Mexican sunflower is very heat and drought tolerant. Its clusters of red-orange 2-3 inch flowers are a favorite of Monarch butterflies, hummingbirds, bees, and other butterfly species and pollinator. This plant has a longer season of bloom than regular sunflowers; which I also love. I prefer to plant both Sunflower and Mexican Sunflower together. By doing so, I can attract birds (especially finches), butterflies, and hummingbirds at the same time.

Avoid overwatering and overfertilizing sunflowers, as these practices can result in lanky plants with weak stems.

There are several cultivars of Mexican sunflower out on the market. ‘Fiesta del Sol’ is a compact variety, only growing 2-3 feet in height. ‘Torch’ was so named because of its vibrant reddish-gold flowers. Yellow Torch and Gold finger (Goldfinch) are two yellow flowered cultivars. These varieties probably have some giant Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia diversifolia*) in their parentage.

The tall Mexican sunflower is a great multi-tasking annual for the garden, so consider adding this to your garden next year.

Organic and Non-GMO seed

Many folks ask about obtaining organic - non-GMO seed nowadays. I try to buy this kind of seed as much as I can. Most annual flower seed one can purchase is non-GMO. The herbicide and bio-tech companies haven’t got around to taking up this market yet. Most seed is produced the old-fashioned way, by hybridizing varieties (taking pollen from one flower to another). Flowers are grown in huge fields and then harvested, dried, and packaged.

Organic seeds are another story. If you truly want organic seeds, then one must purchase seeds that specifically state the seed is organic on the label. If the seed is not organic, then environmentally-friendly pesticides were probably not used in production of the seed.

Certified Organic Autumn Beauty Mix



Certified Organic by Baystate Organic Certifiers

Minimalism

Minimalism is a response from segments of all generations to reject the idea of accumulating resources that - in their minds - are unnecessary. In other words - minimalists want a simple life. They believe in not owing debt, or accumulating resources that tie them down. This of course, is a direct opposite of most baby boomer lifestyles, who work incredibly long hours to accumulate resources they seem never to have time to enjoy. The minimalists also are also interested in the artesian movement – where resources made from long ago are valued because they were made to last. A minimalist would only have a few things-but they would be made well.



A minimalist garden and landscape contain only a few trees and plants in a simplified landscape. No complex time-consuming perennial gardens. Plants are fine, but they need to be enjoyed for the owner’s sake-not to put on a show for others. A minimalist would reduce the lawn in any way possible – just way too much work and resources. Concrete or stone is used to develop areas that are pleasing – but easily cared for. Gardening is important for producing healthy food, but gardens would be small and efficient.

I like the idea of combining all “movements” from the past to create gardens and landscapes that are organic, sustainable, sharable, and minimal. Instead of adapting one trend, and then moving to another, lets combine all for a simpler, healthier lifestyle. A link is found here <https://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Minimalist-Garden>.



The Enneagram



I first learned about the Enneagram approximately five years ago. I was immediately entranced and intrigued by this symbol – and its applications - to know myself and others more effectively.

When I mention the Enneagram to friends or acquaintances nowadays, I am sometimes met with blank looks of disbelief and suspicion. The only thing I can say is the developers of the “modern” Enneagram and its teachings have not done a good job of letting others know just how effective a tool it really can be. Enneagram teachers tend to provide seminars for large groups and corporations. In addition, some people do not like to be “labeled” with in this case a number that in their view defines them as a person - and then told their basic motivations do not change. Finally, some people feel as if it may be some sort of scam developed with an unprovable past in a way just to make money.

The Enneagram of Personality Types is a modern synthesis of several ancient wisdom traditions. The Enneagram *symbol* has roots in antiquity and can be traced back at least as far as the works of Pythagoras. The symbol was reintroduced to the modern world in the 1950’s by George Gurdjieff, the founder of a highly influential inner work school. During the 1960’s, a Bolivian named Oscar Ichazo began putting together a systematic approach to all he had learned about the Enneagram – combined with teaching from other experts and knowledge sources such as Jung.

Later, authors and Enneagram experts Riso and Hudson and psychologist Helen Palmer further enhanced and interpreted the Enneagram.

The basic interpretation of the Enneagram is this: There are 9 personality types based on the 9 points of the Enneagram diagram. Each personality type (based on original sins such as pride, gluttony, etc.) has its strengths and weaknesses and motivations and fears. A key point (and unpopular with many) is that a person’s number or personality type (developed during childhood) does not change.

Also adding to the complexity is that each type has different levels based on personal development and actualization. Therefore, a high-level type one (Ghandi is an example) is much different than a low-level type one.

Also adding to the confusion is that the numbers next to a personality type have some influence on behavior and motivation. The arrows on the diagram also point to characteristics and behavior when one is feeling great about the world or very stressed about themselves and the world around them. There is more, but just knowing what personality number you are (and maybe others you interact with) can really help.

To determine what number (type) you are, one may take a profile test. The Enneagram Institute has a long test (there is a fee). The Institute also has shorter tests and descriptions that are free. Several books have shorter tests to take.

The Personality Types

Type One – The Rational, Idealistic Type: Principled, and Perfectionistic

Ever meet a person who will go out of their way to tell you about a typo in a document or point out why a particular activity was done the “wrong” way - because they “know” the right way to do things? You just encountered a Type One.

Ones have some good qualities: They are conscientious and ethical, with a strong sense of right and wrong. They are often very funny – with a quirky off-color sense of humor. They are teachers, crusaders, and advocates for change: always striving to improve things, but afraid of making a mistake. One’s can slip into being critical and perfectionistic – with others and themselves. They typically have problems with anger, resentment, and impatience because they do not understand why people don’t do things or behave the “right” way - according to them. Anyone can see and point out mistakes- but Ones cannot help themselves - they HAVE to point out mistakes and errors. Jerry Seinfeld is a type One - Every episode was painstakingly thought out until – in his mind - it was perfect.

Type 2 – The Caring, Interpersonal Type: Demonstrative, Generous, People-Pleasing, and Possessive - The Giver

Ever meet a person who loves to give out and receive compliments – who **always** sends thank you notes after you do something nice for them? Two's will bring pies or soup if you are sick – which can be a good thing. Type two's sense of value comes from giving to others – in other words, Two's feel as if they do not give to others, they will not be loved. Princess Diana was a Type 2.

Type 3 – The Achiever

Type Three's sense of value and motivation comes from performance. They tend to be workaholics who love recognition and awards. They can be extremely competitive and jealous if someone else receives recognition instead of them. Unlike a Two, who says "look at what I have given to you", a type Three will say "look at all I have done and accomplished in the world". Tiger Woods and Lady Gaga are famous Type 3's.

Type 4 – The Individualist

A Type 4's weakness is envy – they usually think that others have a better life and upbringing than they did. Fours want to be different than everyone else – and will dress in vintage or bohemian clothing with a flair. Most Fours relate to music and the arts. They tend to not want to be a leader or follower. They can seem moody and detached to other people. Michael Jackson and Cheryl Crow are Type 4's.

Type 5 – The Researcher

Type 5 individuals believe their value comes from in depth knowledge and research of particular topics. Many engineers and computer science people are type Five's. Fives' generally are quiet and reclusive – wanting to be left alone to pursue knowledge. Albert Einstein was a type 5.

Type 6 – Team Players – Fear Based

Ellen DeGeneres is a classic Type 6. Her comedy is based on her verbalization and fear of everything that could go wrong in any situation. Sixes' either are risk takers looking for thrills or they are stay at home family people who just want to feel safe. In the workplace they are either great team players or the person in the background who questions the competence and authority of the boss. Sixes can be very funny – or very vindictive when wronged.

Type 7 – Fun loving Storytellers

Type 7's motivation is stimulation and fun in life. Everyone likes to have fun - but Sevens sense of value comes from constant stimulation and different experiences. Seven's love to tell stories – often funny – and can be the life of any party. They sometimes have trouble staying on any one task - and leave many tasks unfinished once begun. A Seven tends to dwell on the positive, saying things are fine – even when they are not. Lower level Seven's sometimes have issues with drugs or alcohol – gambling – anything which stimulates their senses. John Belushi and George Clooney are Type 7's.

Type 8 – Born Leaders

Ever been in a group or meeting when someone asks "who want to be the leader of this project or event? Almost always a Type 8 will step up to the plate. Eight's want to lead others – in their minds they are the only ones qualified to lead. Many supervisors and CEO's are type Eights. Eights demand loyalty – and can look out and protect the little ones they control. FDR and Betty Davis are Type 8's.

Type 9 – Mediator and Conflict Avoidance

Type 9's are often well-liked – because of their pleasant demeanor. They can be quiet, funny, and talented - all at the same time. Nine's really love animals. They tend to like small tasks - not big tasks. A Nine will often not say what is really on their minds to avoid conflict. Nines hate conflict – and yet they are often very good counselors because they can see many parts of an issue. Only when really pressed or angered will a Nine lose their tempers and let it all come out. Mister Rodgers was a classic Type 9.

To learn more about the Enneagram, one can find many books on the subject – or one can check out this link to the Enneagram Institute for a ton of free information. <https://www.enneagraminstitute.com/>

Vincent van Gogh Sunflowers

The *Sunflowers* were a series of paintings by the Dutch post-impressionist painter Vincent Willem van Gogh, who lived from March 30, 1853 to July 29, 1890. He painted this series between 1888 and 1889. There are a total of seven paintings in this series. All his works, with a few exceptions, are classified with a letter 'F' followed by a number, a method devised by J.B. de la Faille in a book "The Works of Vincent Van Gogh".

The seven paintings are classified as follows:



- The first version of *Sunflowers* (F.453) had a turquoise background it is Oil on canvas and had dimensions of 73.5 x 60 cm. It is in a private collection.
- The second version of *Sunflowers* (F.459) shows a royal-blue background and it is Oil on canvas measuring 98 x 69 cm. This painting was in a private collection in Japan and was destroyed in a fire during WWII on August 6, 1945.
- The third version of *Sunflowers* (F.456) has a light blue green background and it is Oil on canvas measuring 91 x 72 cm. It is in Neue Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.
- The fourth version of *Sunflowers* (F.454) has a yellow background and is Oil on canvas measuring 92.1 x 73 cm. It is in the National Gallery, London, England.
- The fifth version of *Sunflowers* (F.455) is a repetition of the third version and is also Oil on canvas measuring 92 x 72.5 cm. It is in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, US.
- The sixth version of *Sunflowers* (F.458) was a repetition of the fourth version and had a yellow background. It is oil on canvas measuring 95 x 73 cm.



The seventh version of *Sunflowers* (F.457) is a replica of the fourth version and has a yellow green background. It is oil on canvas measuring 100 x 76 cm. It is in the Sompō Japan Museum of Art.

Vincent Van Gogh belonged to the post-impressionist school of painting. They were basically painters, who originated from the school of impressionism but refused to adhere to its limitations. They continued to use vivid colors painted using a thick coat of paint, with distinctive brush strokes and based on real life subjects. They emphasized geometric forms and distorted them for giving additional effect to the painting. At times they painted it in an unnatural or arbitrary color, further enhancing the impression created by the geometrical effect. The *Sunflowers* series are paintings which belong to this school of thought.

Unfortunately in some of his paintings, Van Gogh used inferior quality of paints, which faded, thus losing their original quality. By the time he painted the *Sunflowers* series, innovations in manufactured pigments had improved and new vibrant colors such as chrome yellow were available. This helped Van Gogh to achieve the intensity in the color of the *Sunflowers*.

The *Sunflowers* series has the stamp of Van Gogh on it. Van Gogh, victim to frequent bouts of mental problems, has excelled himself in this series. He has used vibrant colors and they typically express the emotions associated with sunflowers. A bright yellow hue in full bloom, to the shades of brown during wilting and death, all the stages of life and death are woven in a single painting. The *Sunflowers* paintings are the masterpieces of a genius

Hoggles'



To my Caregiver: I am letting you that I am an Enneagram type 10 – The Demandalist – Our motivation is service – from you the caregiver to meet all our demands for food, petting, and personal comfort. We are co-dependent, yet independent, lazy – and we will scratch and spray on anything you value most if we are displeased. The famous countess De le Purr and Pepe Le Phew (a skunk who was enamored of cats) are famous type 10's

An Enneagram Quiz – You are attempting to teach 9 different people how to properly pot a perennial plant. Pick an Enneagram personality type that fits that person. Answers on last page.

A “I hope you don’t mind, but I spent all last night pulling down information from the Internet on potting plants”

B “I hope it’s Ok, I brought some snacks for everyone, and here is a thank-you card for teaching us today.

C “You look a little tired, would you mind if I just went ahead and taught the session for you today?”

D “I can’t help but to point out that the potting soil you have isn’t the best soil for potting perennials – and oh by the way - there are a couple of typos on your handout.

E “Hello everyone! This reminds me of the time I potted perennials in Spain when I was on vacation – I was living in a tent on the beach-near the ocean – eating sardines fresh from a restaurant right on the bay - the wine was

F “Hey all - sorry I am a bit late – I had to accept an award for “best decorated landscape in our neighborhood” – a real honor because I spend so many hours at work - good thing I was named salesperson of the year this year.

G “Are you sure it’s not going to rain today? The last time you taught a session, it rained.

H “Wasn’t the moon so beautiful last night? It made me a little sad though thinking about how I broke up with my boyfriend on the night of a full moon. Seems as if everyone else has wonderful relationships....

I “I hope it’s Ok I brought Sweep with me- He is such as wonderful dog –

Quirky Gardens

I love visiting gardens and seeing how others utilize their creativity to create garden spaces that are unique – yes even a bit quirky. Following are some examples of quirky garden spaces and ideas.





Answers to Enneagram quiz; A Type 5, B Type 2, C Type 8, D Type 1, E Type 7, F Type 3, G Type 6, H Type 4, I Type 9

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Ricky Kemery will not knowingly discriminate in any way based on race, gender etc...