

Whether on your balcony or in your backyard, technology makes it even easier to be a successful gardener by identifying plants, creating care schedules, designing garden plots, and more. There are dozens of free gardening apps to help you get started and most offer premium subscription options as well. Gardening information and recommendations from apps are based on your location, so it is recommended to use a device with GPS location tracking enabled, which is the standard for cell phones. The following apps are some easy-to-use starter apps depending on how much you want to get into gardening or just learning more about the nature in your area. All of these apps are available in the Google Play and Apple App Stores.

## Plant Net

[plantnet.org](http://plantnet.org)

This app uses location information in order to find local flora (Illinois is in the North-Central region). An account is **not** required to use this app. Having an account allows you to share finds with other users.

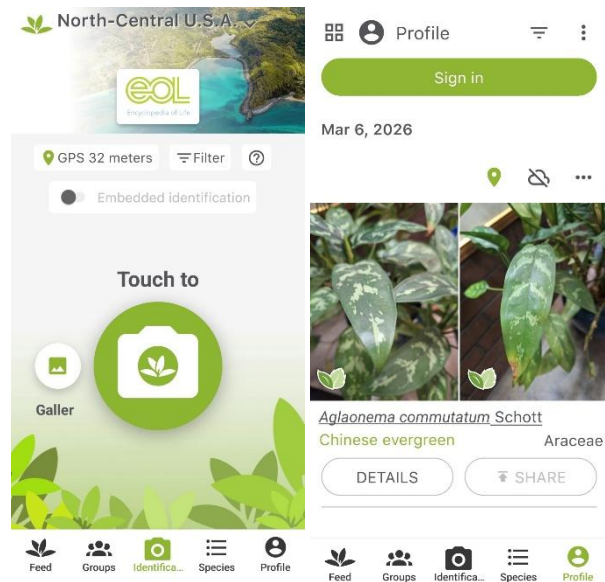
The app has five tabs: **Feed, Groups, Identification, Species, and Profile.**

**Feed/Groups:** Regional updates from other users and local communities.

**Identification:** Take photos and scan plants in real time here.

**Species:** Guide for all regional plants by Family/Genus/Species.

**Profile:** Account and preferences management.



Plant Net Home page

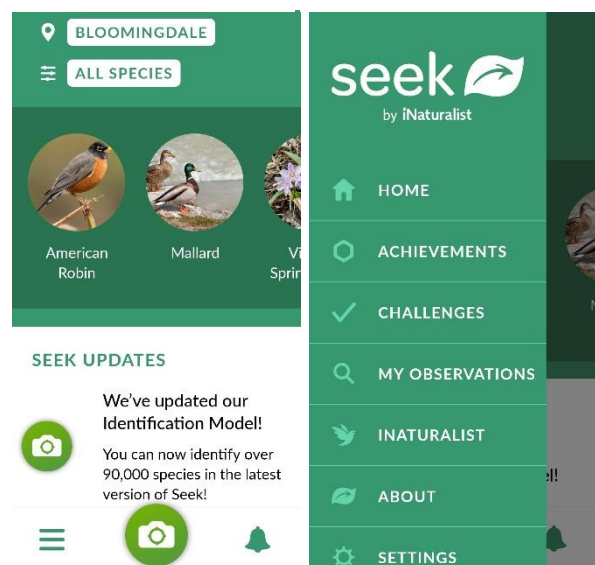
Plant Net Profile page

## Seek

[https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek\\_app](https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app)

This is another app for identifying local flora.

This app is free and does **not** require an account. The app has a home page with a large camera button and a menu button in the upper-left corner with tabs for **achievements, challenges, account settings, app settings,** and more. Clicking the camera button allows you to start scanning your environment and rapidly identify plants and animals around you.



Seek home page

Seek menu

## Planter

*planter.garden*

This app is free, but does have restrictions unless you choose a subscription tier. Premium unlocks the web app, unlimited gardens, notes, custom backgrounds, and more. The website version of the app is unavailable without being a Premium tier user.

The app has five tabs: **Gardens, Plants, Calendar, Guide, and More.**

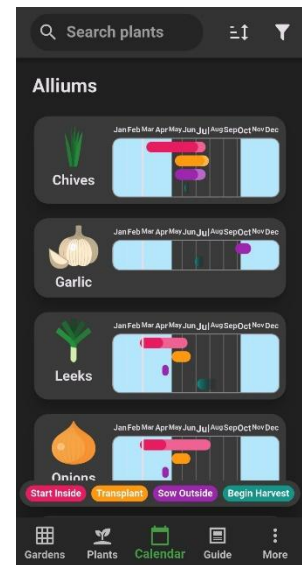
**Gardens:** Create your garden layout. Add plants from here.

**Plants:** Database of all plant options, with detailed info for each type.

**Calendar:** Track when plants can be seeded, transplanted, harvested, etc.

**Guide:** Curated gardening blog.

**More:** Profile settings, tasks, pest and disease database, and more.



*Planter calendar page*

## Veg Plotter

*vegplotter.com*

This app is free, but does have restrictions unless you choose a subscription tier. Premium unlocks custom plants and the ability to share gardens. The app itself defaults to your last used plot. You can select the + button in the upper-right corner and choose to add structures, plant beds, and adjust plot settings. As you go through the months, you'll see the plant bed options shift when it's time to harvest or plant new seeds. There are also snapshot and ruler tools in the upper-right corner in case you need to measure a section again.

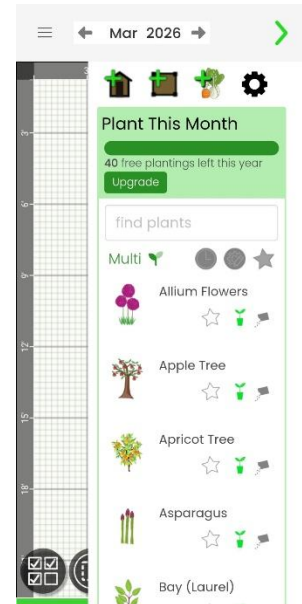
**Assess:** Evaluate your space, note sunlight patterns (6–8 hours is ideal), soil quality, and existing features like beds, fences, trees and sheds.

**Measure:** Take measurements of your plot and existing structures to help create a scale foundation for your plan.

**Design:** Map out your ideal beds, paths and structures.

**Decide:** Choose crops you want to eat that are suitable to your local climate and hardiness zone.

**Automate:** Calculate precise sowing, planting, and harvesting dates based on your local frost data.



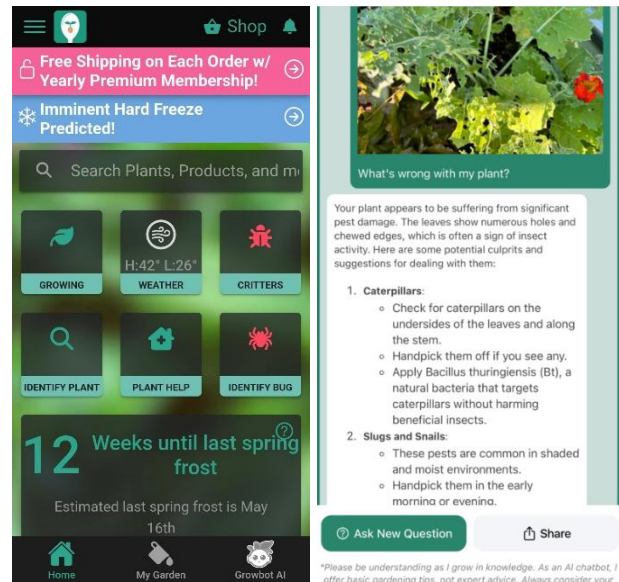
*Veg Plotter plant options*

## Seed to Spoon

[seedtospoon.net](http://seedtospoon.net)

This app is an extremely versatile gardening calendar. An account is **not** required for this app, but is recommended if you are using the app on multiple devices. Data is based on your location, and gives you recommended dates for everything from when to seed to when to harvest. The crop options allow you to map out the spacing of your plots and scheduled tasks are easily adjustable, especially if you know an unexpected patch of bad weather is coming or want to add a new fertilizer to certain crops.

The app has three tabs: **Home, My Garden, and Growbot AI**. Growbot AI allows user to ask an AI chat bot up to three free gardening questions daily.



*Seed to Spoon Home page*

*Seed to Spoon Growbot AI*

Over time, you can learn what crops benefit from being planted together, and more importantly, which crops can't be interplanted. While there are many charts that do this, the app allows you to look up the info while out in the garden and get data on what to interplant and what to avoid. The app works best as a reference library for interplanting.

## Seed Time

[seedtime.us](http://seedtime.us)

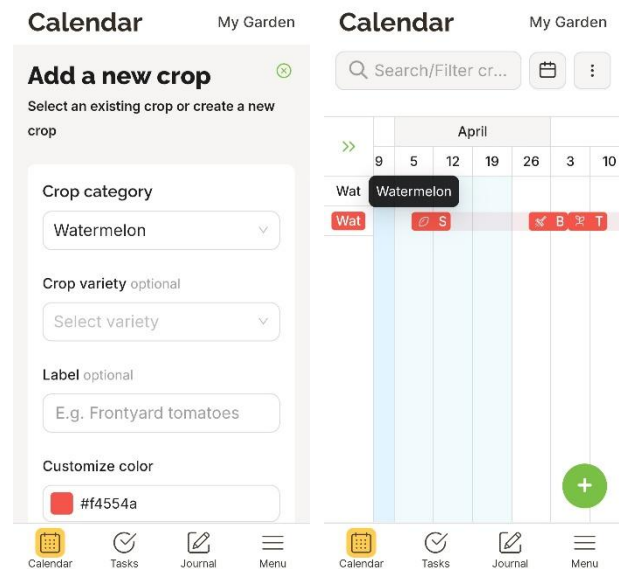
This app is an extremely versatile gardening calendar. The crop options allow you to map out the spacing of your plots and scheduled tasks are easily adjustable.

The app has four tabs: **Calendar, Tasks, Journal, and Menu**.

**Calendar:** Add crops, crop information, and see the overall schedule for harvesting.

**Tasks/Journal:** View upcoming work for the day/week and make notes of crop observations.

**Menu:** Profile settings, store, classroom, and community access.



*Seed Time Adding Crops*

*Seed Time Calendar page*

An account is required for this app. The app is free, but does have restrictions unless you choose a subscription tier. Free tier includes 1 garden, unlimited tasks and journal entries, access to the store and classroom, and 10 AI tokens. There is currently not a way to export the calendar into a separate existing calendar system like Google or Apple.

## Tips & Tricks

1. Start small. If this is your first gardening attempt, give yourself time to get used to the physical labor and time investment that gardening requires. Talk with people at your local plant nursery.
2. Plant based on your space constraints. **Ground** gardening is the traditional method and best if you have the space for it. The intensity of pests, weeds, and weather accommodation can be deterrents. **Containers** are good if you are starting small or have limited space. They also allow you to move your garden around more easily, and you don't have to till the soil. You may need to water and fertilize more frequently. **Raised beds** are good when your soil is bad, you have limited mobility, or you simply don't have enough space for a ground garden. This option tends to trade convenience for cost, so be sure to do some materials shopping before starting.
3. Leave extra space when planting. Plants need room to grow and gather more resources.
4. Water and fertilize plants regularly, especially during hot and dry weather. Water at the base of plants and earlier in the day when the sun is less intense. Be sure to read how much water your plants need so you don't risk dehydrating or drowning the plants.
5. Clear weeds regularly. Be sure to pull out the root, not just cut the visible section.
6. Look into different types of barriers to protect your plants. Wire fencing can keep out larger animals, and plant covers can keep out most pests. Try to use natural pesticides when possible, as these can keep the plants healthier and allow beneficial bugs to take care of pests.
7. Don't forget to harvest regularly!

## Links

<https://www.johnnyseeds.com/seed-quantity-calculator/>

<https://www.johnnyseeds.com/growers-library/seed-planting-schedule-calculator.html>

<https://gardenate.com/>

<https://provenwinners.com/>

<https://www.bhg.com/gardening/plans/easy/15-no-fuss-garden-plans/>

<https://dontwastethecrumbs.com/50-ways-to-fertilize-the-garden-for-free/>