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Top 5 Things to Know when New to Gardening

1. Learn that quality, healthy soil is the main building block of any garden.
2. Learn the light exposure in your landscape.
3. Start with a small garden or a few pots, so you don't get overwhelmed.
4. Research plants before purchasing them.
5. Know that gardening is full of trial and error, and be okay with that.

1. Learn that quality, healthy soil is the main building block of any garden.

- Without healthy soil, plants lack a source of essential nutrients and struggle to grow.
- Incorporate organic matter, like compost or aged manure, into native garden soils and purchase quality potting mixes.
- By nurturing the soil in your landscapes and pots, you lay the foundation for thriving gardens and container gardens, bursting with vibrant, and productive plants.

2. Learn the light exposure in your landscape.

- Monitor and take notes of light exposure for a day from sun up to sun down. Notice what time shadows fall and how long they cast shade.

- For instance, sun-loving plants like tomatoes need at least six hours of direct sunlight, while shade-loving plants such as ferns do best with minimal sun exposure. You wouldn't want to plant a tomato under a bunch of trees that cast filtered light all day, or a fern somewhere that receives the hot afternoon sun.
- When learning light exposure in your landscape, also keep in mind that the intensity of our San Antonio sun is different throughout the year. For example: A plant that does well in full afternoon sun in the springtime, might crisp up and burn in the same place during summer.

3. Start with a small garden or a few pots, so you don't get overwhelmed.

- Choose a few easy-to-grow plants that thrive in our local climate, and focus on learning their needs.
- As you gain confidence and experience, you can gradually expand your garden, experimenting with different types of plants and more complex gardening techniques.
- Consider starting with herbs like basil or mint, which can be grown in small pots and are forgiving to beginners.

4. Research plants before purchasing them.

- Understanding the specific needs of each plant will ensure they thrive in their new environment.
- Consider needs such as sunlight, water, soil type, climate compatibility, and height and width at mature growth.
- Gathering this information not only promotes healthier plants but also leads to a more rewarding gardening experience.
- It can save you money and effort by reducing the likelihood of plant replacements and unnecessary maintenance.

5. Know that gardening is full of trial and error, and be okay with that.

- Each plant has its own unique needs, and sometimes it takes a few attempts to understand what makes them thrive.
- Embrace the learning process and celebrate the small victories along the way.
- Remember, even the most experienced gardeners started with a single seed and learned through their mistakes.
- Don't be afraid to ask for advice. Rainbow Gardens is just a visit, phone call, or email away and we are happy to help you achieve success.
- Whether you have a small balcony or a sprawling backyard, the joy of nurturing life from the soil is a reward in itself. So, roll up your sleeves, get your hands dirty, and savor the journey of growth. Your garden will thank you with its beauty, and you'll find a deeper connection to the natural world around you.