



“From Seed to Second Harvest: Sprouting Your First Sustainable Garden”

Special Web Section Sponsored by



Special Section Premise: Gardening expert, TV host and author Nan Sterman takes you step by step through planning your first sustainable, varietal garden.

Special Promotion: Submit 3-5 photos or a 1-minute video of your gardening space, along with a brief explanation, for a chance to win a garden space analysis from Nan Sterman to be featured on the television show, *A Growing Passion*, a signed copy of Nan’s *California Gardener’s Guide Vol. II*, and \$500 worth of garden makeover supplies from Ace Hardware.

About Nan Sterman



Nan Sterman is a garden expert, designer, blogger, and award-winning garden communicator. She is author of *California Gardener’s Guide Vol. II* and *Waterwise Plants for the Southwest*, both books about drought tolerant gardening. Nan contributes regularly to regional and national publications such as the *Los Angeles Times*, *San Diego Union Tribune*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Sunset*, *Burpee*, and *Organic Gardening*, for whom she also tests new varieties of vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Nan is a regular guest on radio and the host of *A Growing Passion*, a television show about ordinary people who happen to be extraordinary and passionate gardeners. *A Growing Passion* takes viewers into their own backyards to explore ways to create beautiful and welcoming outdoor living spaces using plants and products that are achievable, affordable, attractive, and in tune with the natural environment. Nan is both a biologist and botanist who has practiced sustainable gardening since the 1970s.

Special Web Section Components

- 1.) A 5-step video series with captions (clickable arrows forward and back)
 - *10-second sponsor ad before first and last videos*
 - a. Plan your sustainable, organic garden
 - b. Test your soil and research your garden zone
 - c. Understanding different fruit, vegetable and herb seeds
 - d. Learn about crop timing; estimate mature size
 - e. Map out your plants and get your hands dirty
- 2.) Click-through contest teaser taking viewers to Promotion Landing Page, rules, and Nan Sherman's bio + latest book, *California Gardener's Guide, Volume II*, sponsor logo, and link to expert and sponsor websites
- 3.) New Article: "From the Garden to the Table: Cook and Serve What You Grow"
- 4.) Ideas for additional relevant content pulled from *Whole Living* archives
 - a. Composting video
 - b. Downloadable zone map
 - c. Vegetable seed guide
 - d. Flower guide
 - e. Herb guide
 - f. Perennial tree guide
 - g. "Gardening Mistakes to Avoid"
 - h. Tips for getting the kids involved in the gardening process
 - i. A combination fruit/vegetable/herb dual planting and harvesting calendar
 - j. *For More Tips...Subscribe to Whole Living*
- 5.) Retail options on selected garden items from Ace Hardware (rotating or static row at bottom of page)
- 6.) Inline hyperlinks for all articles
- 7.) Sponsor's logo at top of page and in customized banner ad on right side column
- 8.) Reader involvement and user-generated content options
 - o Social Media Elements: Digg, FB, Twitter, ShareThis, del.icio.us, Google+, StumbleUpon, Tumblr, Reddit
 - o Comments & Discussion
 - o "Share Your Pics and Stories"
 - Upload a photo of your garden to the "Sprouting Your Sustainable Garden" page on Flickr. Photos with the most "likes" will be displayed on our gallery page
 - OR
 - Blog about your garden as it grows! Join our group blog on Tumblr to share photos, videos and comments
- 6.) Standard *Whole Living* template top, sidebar, and bottom-level navigation

Responsibilities

- Freelance video production and photography professionals
- Web Producer/Designer: page design, navigation, custom graphics, SEO, maintenance of page functionality (based on GA conversion, exit, & bounce rates) and Flickr or Tumblr community page
- Gardening Editor: research, article and promotional copy, archived article selection
- Project Manager: sponsor and in-house departmental liaison, contest fulfillment
- Legal: photo rights and contest rules
- Ace Hardware: logo and retail item graphics, and certain promotional specs

6 Week Timeline / Launch: April 2, 2012

- **Feb 15-23:** Develop wireframe, content abstracts and script for client approval
- **Feb 24-Mar 8:** Develop site designs and custom graphics; scout locations for photos, video; meet with talent to review script and make revisions as needed
- **Feb 15-Mar 16:** Outreach to potential advertisers, working with client product lines, obtaining client graphics and promotion specs
- **Mar 9-16:** Review site designs and make revisions as needed
- **Mar 9-23:** Shoot and edit video and still photos. Photo rights secured.
- **Mar 9-23:** Research, write; finalize content, video and graphics for client approval
- **March 23-28:** Site production and SEO; submit test to client for approval
- **March 29-April 1:** Make refinements as needed. Test launch and final approvals.
- **April 2:** Special Section Launch date
- **April 2 – May 31:** Promotion and Special Section Run

Goals for Special Web Section & Promotion

An advertising executive will need to accurately predict these numbers for Whole Living and Ace, based on similar special sections. However, here are some potential projections:

- Attract an average of 500+ unique visitors per day.
- Maintain an average time on page of 5.0 minutes.
- Generate an average of 7 page views per visit.
- Bounce rate below 50%
- Refer an average of 250 visitors to sponsor site per day.
- Attract a total of 300+ visitors to social media community.
- Receive 5,000 contest submissions over the course of the program.
- Track traffic source data: referring sites, search engines, direct referrals, and keywords.
- Track regional conversion rates by keyword to help us target our best market.
- Gauge how design, content and navigation affected conversion, bounce and exit rates
- Track e-commerce sales figures with Ace Hardware and other advertisers.

The goal of this special web section and promotion is to entice first-time garden growers to take the first 5 basic steps that will lead to a sustainable and varietal garden for years to come. The 5 video steps are easy and broad enough to apply to a variety of garden types and regions, yet detailed enough to make each garden unique. Google Analytics will provide immediate feedback on whether viewers are making it through all 5 steps and which articles are generating the greatest readership, informative for continued promotion of the special section and development of future content. Similarly, users will be able to create an account for purchase of products, and clients can track e-commerce sales figures. Viewers will find Nan Sterman friendly, and her approach manageable and realistic. The interactive video, photo, community, downloadables, available products, sponsor deals, and contest housed within the special section will provide viewers multiple resources throughout their gardening journey, increasing the likelihood that they will return to the site regularly, and hopefully converting viewers to loyal Ace customers and Whole Living subscribers, who see both brands as the go-to places to shop for plants, garden products, and gardening expertise.

Ongoing Development and Enhancement of the Site

If the site is a success according to the above measures, the do-it-yourself and grassroots, user-driven aspects of the site will be important components of that success. At the same time, it will be important to balance that feel with the expert knowledge and quality products provided by Ace and Whole Living for a successful garden project. As users build their gardens and as the site continues to develop background articles that prove useful to readers, I would develop a monthly e-newsletter for the growing user base that selects the best of the site's articles for that month and time of year, including features like new plant of the month, product of the month and tip of the month. The newsletter would also feature one of the regular readers who submitted a photo or success story of his or her garden project, with multiple photos; that individual would receive a gift of a \$50 coupon for gardening products as well. Meanwhile the site will continue to build a library of articles, images, user stories and garden project plans that would be accessible to all users. The newsletter would therefore function as a monthly "digest" of site content to continue to attract new users.