alt. gardening
no backyard required.

An Honors Thesis

By

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ABSTRACT

The crowded garden magazine market already supports a wealth of publications, yet no existing gardening magazine speaks to the growing generation of young gardeners or specifically addresses the unique aspects of urban gardening. *alt.gardening* is designed to appeal to a younger generation of gardeners in its appearance, tone and methodology. Its content inspires urban dwellers to grow their own “alt.garden”—an atypical garden in an atypical space: perhaps a deck, terrace, patio or even a windowsill. *alt.gardening* encourages readers to experiment in order to create gardens that suit their personalities and tastes and mesh with their fast-paced lifestyles. It also keeps urban gardeners informed about trends and issues revolving around the urban “green” movement. Whether they view city gardening as a radical political act or simply want to grow a few fresh herbs to spruce up their dinner entrees, young, urban gardeners will find in *alt.gardening* the information and expertise for them to bring their garden to life.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Thank you to Dr. David Sumner for advising me throughout the process of developing this magazine business plan and prototype. Thanks for enduring with great patience my slow progress throughout the school year and for taking the time out of your summer vacation to meet with me and offer advice and constructive critiques. Thanks also for your support and encouragement with this project, with expo magazine, with classwork and with the job search.

- Thanks to Lori Herber for assisting me with “cleaning up” the magazine design. I don’t know where I’d be without friends with the technical know-how to execute my vision.

- Thanks to Jon Scott for laboring on his own thesis nearby me in the library all those hours—and commiserating!

- Thanks to my parents and to my friends (Evan, Sara, Tiffany, Lisa, Doug, Alex, Katie, Becky, Lew, Mark M., Mark N., Chad, Amy, Ryan, Matt, Melissa and everyone else who I’m forgetting at the moment) who offered support, encouragement, prayer and feedback.
BUSINESS PLAN

CONCEPT DESCRIPTION

- Purpose

  *alt.gardening* serves as the action plan for young urbanites seeking to get their grow on. It delivers practical (yet unconventional) gardening advice for cultivating a plot in the unlikeliest of places: a tiny patio, a rooftop, a windowsill, a vacant lot.

  *alt.gardening’s* do-it-yourself approach and down-to-earth tone inspires and empowers young plantsters to create their own urban eden on a dime—and on a dime-sized plot.

  o What is “*alt.gardening*”?

    “*Alt.gardening*” is a new approach to gardening — one that defies the notion that a garden must be a perfect-rowed veggie plot or an ocean of perennials and instead modifies the traditional approach to gardening in order to create green places in cramped urban spaces. *Alt.gardeners* grow atypical gardens in atypical spaces, potting herbs on a windowsill, staking tomatoes on a patio, or nursing annuals to bloom in an alleyway. The term “*alt.gardening*” embraces the new generation of gardeners who’ve taken to this new kind of gardening.

- Editorial Philosophy

  o Content

    *alt.gardening* offers a solutions-oriented approach to gardening in small urban spaces such as patios, decks, terraces, rooftops, or containers with
practical advice and fresh ideas. Additional content includes a focus on metropolitan garden style; do-it-yourself projects using inexpensive and/or salvaged materials; profiles of unique, inspiring public and private urban gardens (including community gardens); gardening news and trends in alternative gardening methods; a Q&A section and profiles of plants especially well-suited for the alt.garden.

○ Design

alt.gardening carries a crisp, colorful, photo-driven design with a funky urban flair to appeal to the young, urban audience and support the editorial purpose of the magazine.

- Editorial Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Header</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th># of Pages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>{contents}</td>
<td>Table of contents</td>
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<td>{editor}</td>
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<td>{dirt}</td>
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<td>{fresh}</td>
<td>Style, trends, innovations</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{create}</td>
<td>DIY project</td>
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<td>{grassroots}</td>
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<td>How to use your harvest</td>
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<td>{solutions}</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
<td>1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>{grow}</td>
<td>Photo and profile of a suggested plant</td>
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| Season          | Features                                                                 | Create/###/
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Spring 2006     | • Small Space, Big Impact  
• Window box projects  
• Plants that do double duty  | Strawberry jar garden  
alt.garden profile Rooftop garden in Chicago  

{create}  
{harvest} Drying herbs on a coat hanger  

Summer 2006   | • Fake A Backyard (garden rooms)  
• Well-placed pots  
• Zeroing in on your microclimate  | {create} Homemade pest repellent  
alt.garden profile Community garden in NYC  

{create}  
{harvest} Flower arranging basics  

Fall 2006     | • Soil Preparation/Soil Alternatives sidebar  
• Foliage  
• Design Principles  | {create} Hypertufa trough  
alt.garden profile Patio garden  

{create}  
{harvest} Harvesting fresh salad greens in fall  

Winter 2007  | • Shopping for your small-space garden  
• Winter flowering plants  
• Guerrilla gardens  | {create} Windowsill herb garden  
alt.garden profile Community garden in Philadelphia  

{create}  
{harvest} Canning basics  

March/April 2007 | • Sanctuary In The City  
• Living Walls  
• Succulents  | {create} Patio espalier  
alt.garden profile Balcony garden in San Francisco  

{create}  
{harvest} TBD  

May/June 2007  | • Stylish solutions for tight spaces  
• Go vertical  
• City ordinances: what you need to know  | {create} Tool tote  
alt.garden profile TBD  

{create}  
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July/Aug. 2007 | • Compost  
• Fall Cleanup  
• Harvest special  |
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<tr>
<td>harvest</td>
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| Sept./Oct. 2007 | Features | Makeover special: Urban edens
|          |          | Trees
|          |          | Grow anything in a container
|          | create  | Seed-saver box |
| alt.garden profile | TBD |
| harvest | TBD |
| Nov./Dec. 2007 | Features | Weather
|          |          | Dwarf plant varieties
|          |          | Window box vegetables
|          | create  | Garden journal |
| alt.garden profile | TBD |
| harvest | TBD |
| Jan./Feb. 2008 | Features | Hot picks for 2008
|          |          | Seed starting
|          |          | Water gardens
|          | create  | Privacy-screen trellis |
| alt.garden profile | TBD |
| harvest | TBD |

- **Audience**

*alt.gardening’s* readers are young artists and professionals age 18-34 who reside in mid-size to large metropolitan areas. As a group, they are culturally savvy, style-conscious, environmentally aware. Single or married without children, the mostly female audience resides in small spaces: apartments, condos or tiny houses on cramped lots. They seek an innovative approach to gardening in a constrictive environment on a tight budget. They want simple solutions and easy ideas with a hip, metropolitan flair. They currently read magazines such as Budget Living, Budget Travel, Fitness, Glamour, Jane, Organic Style, Rolling Stone and Shape.

- **Competition**

Among *alt.gardening’s* chief competitors in the gardening magazine sector *Fine Gardening, Garden Design, Horticulture* and *Organic Gardening* magazines.
Additionally, magazines that devote a significant portion of their content to gardening, such as Better Homes & Gardens, House & Garden, Martha Stewart Living and Southern Living, may be considered indirect competitors.

- Proof of Need

A May 6, 2004 New York Times article declared gardening a blossoming trend among “culturally plugged-in urban 20-somethings and early-30-somethings” who “may not own backyards, but…are determined to make things grow.” As cities continue to expand and more and more people choose to reside in metropolitan areas, many turn to gardening as a means of getting back to nature in the midst of their concrete jungle. The growing popularity of rooftop gardening and community gardening as a means of “greening” metropolitan areas for city beautification, better air quality and improved intra-community relations has exposed the urban-dwellers of the Gen-X crowd to a hobby that was once reserved for middle-aged and retired suburban homeowners. Gardening has been called both “the new yoga” and “the new rock ‘n’ roll” in recent history and is coming back into vogue, according to Gayla Trail, author of “You Grow Girl,” a gardening book geared toward hip, young urban gardeners. Today, 12% of gardeners nationwide are ages 18-24, and 39% are ages 25-44, according to the Gardening Trends Research Report published in June 2004 for the Garden Writers Association Foundation. Additionally, some 41% of gardeners reside in urban areas, the report indicates.

Gardening in the city requires a departure from traditional gardening techniques; few city garden spaces have the capacity to host neat rows of vegetables, well-manicured lawns or expansive perennial beds. Instead, urban gardeners must
contend with the toughest environs. Skyscrapers and other city infrastructure create microclimates: a particular plot may be cast in shade most of the day or receive intense sun exposure due to sunlight reflected in building windows, altering temperatures and affecting what type of plant can be grown. Additionally, urban gardens are exposed to increased pollution and are subject to city ordinances and building and zoning codes. Unusual spaces such as rooftops and terraces require adaptive methods such as using alternative growing mediums and creation of irrigation systems.

The crowded garden magazine market already supports a wealth of publications, yet no existing gardening magazine speaks to the growing generation of young gardeners or specifically addresses the unique aspects of urban gardening. *alt.gardening* appeals to a younger generation of gardeners in its appearance, tone and methodology. Its content inspires urban dwellers to grow their own *alt.garden* and encourages them to experiment in order to create gardens that suit their personalities and tastes and mesh with their fast-paced lifestyles. It also keeps urban gardeners informed about trends and issues revolving around the urban “green” movement. Whether they view city gardening as a radical political act or simply want to grow a few fresh herbs to spruce up their dinner entrees, young, urban gardeners will find in *alt.gardening* the information and expertise for them to bring their garden to life.
ADVERTISING ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIES

At a CPM of $45 for a full-page color ad and $30 for a full-page black-and-white ad, *alt.gardening*’s ad prices are positioned slightly below that of other gardening magazines in order to more easily attract new advertising clients. With a target circulation of 95,000 in 2006, a full-page color ad is priced at $4,275, and a full-page black-and-white ad is priced at $2,850. *alt.gardening* is an attractive outlet for advertisers in the following business categories, all of which appeal to the target audience’s interests and product needs for creating their own alt.garden:

- Do-it-yourself, hobby and craft centers (Home Depot, Lowe’s, Jo-Ann Fabrics and Crafts)
- Dot.com gardening retailers geared toward urban gardeners (urbangardencenter.com)
- Gardening media (HGTV, gardening books)
- Gardening product companies (Clean Air Gardening, Foxgloves)
- Garden lifestyle retailers (Smith & Hawken)
- Mail-order seed companies (Burpee, Park, etc.)
- Mass merchandisers (Target)
- Outdoor/gardening apparel companies (Eddie Bauer, L.L. Bean, Teva)
- Outdoor materials suppliers (Trex)
- Paint companies (Sherwin-Williams)
- Pottery companies
- Rooftop gardening materials suppliers
- Tool companies (A.M. Leonard, Fiskars)
• Urban gardening centers in various locations (GRDN in Brooklyn, Urban Gardener in Chicago)

CIRCULATION ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIES

*alt.gardening* will initially launch a direct marketing campaign targeting 2,500,000 potential customers. Names will be acquired from purchase of subscription lists of magazines that share *alt.gardening*’s target audience (see “Audience” section for examples), and only potential customers living in metropolitan areas will be targeted. A projected 3% response rate on this direct marketing campaign will yield 75,000 subscribers, about 79% of total projected sales in 2006. Subscription sales will also be made available through the magazine’s Web site, www.altgardening.com, and through blow-ins in newsstand copies. Projected newsstand sales for 2006 are 20,000, about 21% of total projected sales. *alt.gardening* will be sold on newsstands in bookstores such as Barnes & Noble and Borders, supermarkets, corner markets, gardening centers, nurseries and newsstands in metropolitan areas.

Circulation will extend throughout major metropolitan areas in the United States and Canada, with single copies sold for $3.95 and subscriptions sold for $12.95. *alt.gardening* will initially publish four issues per year in a seasonal scheme. With additional revenue, the magazine will transition to bimonthly publication, aiming for a circulation of 120,000 by 2008.
STAFFING PLAN

Editorial

- **Editor**—Oversees editorial and business staff, conducts staff meetings, formulates long-term editorial calendar, responsible for top editing, writes occasional front-of-book and feature articles, ensures that editorial vision is maintained, represents magazine to public

- **Managing Editor**—Handles copy flow and scheduling, manages staff and freelancer pay, edits copy, does some writing where needed

- **Associate Editor**—Responsible for writing some front-of-book and feature articles, assigns articles to freelancers and acts as liaison to freelancers, researches new article topics

- **Art Director**—Chief designer of magazine and ancillary materials, handles advertisement placement, art directs photo shoots, assigns freelance design and illustrations when and where necessary

- **Photo Editor**—Oversees photo shoots, edits photos, assigns freelance photographers and purchases stock photography from freelance photographers, edits photos

Business

- **Advertising Director**—Prepares advertising kit, handles current advertising client accounts and pursues new accounts, handles advertising copy and supervises production

- **Business Manager**—Provides administrative support, including answering phones; scheduling; handling reader correspondence, postal mail, faxing and
filing; organizing and maintaining paper and electronic records and creating reports and meeting minutes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>EDITORIAL</strong></th>
<th><strong>2006</strong></th>
<th><strong>BASIC ASSUMPTIONS</strong></th>
<th><strong>2006</strong></th>
<th><strong>2007</strong></th>
<th><strong>2008</strong></th>
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</table>

**ADMINISTRATION**

| Staff salary (1 person)            | $30,000  | Total copies printed  | 115,000  | 151,000  | 167,000  |
| Staff benefits (@ 30%)              | $9,000   | Single copy retail cost | $3.95   |          |          |
| Office postage (est)                | $3,000   | Subscription retail cost | $12.95  |          |          |
| Staff travel (est)                  | $5,000   | Renewal rate          | 75%      |          |          |
| Equipment purchase                  | $25,000  | Sell-through rate     | 50%      |          |          |
| Equipment lease                     | $4,500   | DM response rate      | 3%       |          |          |
| Office rental (@ $600/mo)           | $7,200   | # of issues per year  | 4        | 6        | 6        |
| Telephone                           | $4,000   | # of pages per issue  | 74       |          |          |
| Electric/heating                    | $2,400   | Printing cost         | 80 cents/copy |      |          |
| Attorney & CPA fees                 | $6,000   | Postage per issue     | 37 cents/copy |      |          |

**ADVERTISING**

| Staff salary (ad director)          | $30,000  | New sub direct mail  | 2,500,000 |      |          |
| Staff benefits (@ 30%)              | $9,000   | Number of nonrenewals | 18,750  |      |          |
| Renewal sub direct mail            | N/A      | Renewal sub direct mail | N/A     |      |          |

**DISTRIBUTION**

| DM Costs                            | $1,259,375 | Total DM pieces     | 2,518,750 |      |          |
| Fulfillment (@ $1.50/sub)            | $112,500   | DM per piece        | $0.50     |      |          |
| Postage (@ 37 cents/copy)            | $111,000   | Yearly fulfillment  | $1.50     |      |          |
| Cost per color ad (page)             | 4,275      | Cost per B&W ad (page) | 2,850   | 3,225.0 | 3,600   |
| Printing magazines (@ 80 cents)      | $368,000   | Cost per B&W ad (page) | 2,850   | 3,225.0 | 3,600   |

**TOTAL EXPENSES**

| $2,202,975                           |          | Color CPM           | $45      |      |          |
| B&W CPM                             |          | Color ads per issue | 24       |      |          |
| Color ads per year                  |          | Color ads per year  | 96       |      |          |
| B&W ads per issue                   |          | B&W ads per issue   | 10       |      |          |
| B&W ads per year                    |          | B&W ads per year    | 40       |      |          |
| TOTAL REVENUE                        | $1,574,650 | VENTURE CAPITAL REQ'D | $2,500,000 |      |          |
| PROFIT/LOSS                          | ($628,325) |                      |          |      |          |
plants that do double duty

brooklyn's community garden breakthrough

whimsical window boxes

small space. big impact
ON THE COVER
French lavender
Lavandula stoechas
is beautiful, strongly
perfumed and an
ideal companion for
many vegetables as
it attracts beneficial
insects and helps
repel pests.

38 pretty delicious
These incredible edible plants add color to your garden
and flavor to your dinner plate.

42 less is more — really!
No yard? No problem. Maximize your space (or lack
thereof) with these seven simple tricks.

47 window box delights
Whip together one of these three easy mini-gardens for
a wealth of color and fragrance—for mere pennies.
A rooftop garden in Chicago reaches new heights.

Dwarf plants with a giant impact. Get free coffee grounds for your garden. And more.

Sturdy, stylish aluminum. Tag holders on the cheap (and easy). Tool time: the dirt on hand pruners. And more.

Fresh berries from your patio.

Guerrilla gardening takes hold of New York City. Urban gardener and Chicago restaurateur Sarah Steedman’s dirty secret.

Dry herbs on a coat hanger.

Your questions answered.

Heavenly hellebores.
NEW PLANTS

when smaller is better

ANY EXCUSE SUFFICES FOR VISITS TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GARDENS IN AND AROUND NEW YORK CITY, SO when the Perennial Plant Association held its annual symposium there last July, this was a not-to-be-missed event. Although it’s a professional trade association, the PPA welcomes the public to some of its meetings and provides free information, such as its guide to Herbaceous Perennial Gardens in the United States and Canada, available at www.perennialplant.org, where 360 test gardens are listed. Also check information about the 2005 symposium scheduled for July 17-24 in Knoxville and Nashville, Tennessee.

Highlights of the NYC meeting included the following new dwarf varieties of old favorite perennials suitable for containers or small gardens. They’ll soon be available nationwide at garden centers:

- **Gaillardia**
  - ‘Fanfare’ is a dramatic new 12- to 16-inch-tall hybrid cultivar of an American native known for its ease of growth, vivid colors and uniformity of plant habit. This seedling sport was selected by Richard Read, owner of a garden center in England. Give it full sun for bloom from early June into fall. Deadhead for more of its abundant 4-inch flowers. Besides a sturdy compact form, it boasts unusual upward-facing ray flowers with scarlet trumets that flare to bright yellow at the tips. Use it in containers on a sunny terrace. Zones 5-8.

- **Delphinium grandiflorum**
  - ‘Summer Stars,’ ‘Summer Nights,’ and ‘Summer Colors’ are designed to lure delphinium lovers tired of staking floppy plants. Touted for compactness, these lacy-leaved plants grow only 10 to 12 inches tall, thrive in full sun to part shade, require average moisture and supposedly tolerate heat better than other delphiniums. Blooms of ‘Summer Stars’ are white, ‘Summer Colors’ boasts a mix of dark and light blues, and ‘Summer Nights’ bears dark-blue blossoms. Zones 2-7.
sitting pretty

For a fresh, modern and earth-friendly touch to your outdoor room, think cast aluminum furniture. Here's why:

- Will last and last in any climate—a good investment
- Never rusts or corrodes
- Material can be recycled
- Sturdy quality that holds up in the wind
- Cleans with soap and water

Island Bistro chair, Curran Online (www.curranonline.com)

You may not have a woodland eden in your backyard, but you can create the same enchanted moss-covered look on anything from terra-cotta to a cement or stone walkway with the mossy-pot mix ($12, gardenerandbarrow.com). The mix arrives in a replica of an old English garden pot.

DIY 1-2-3

copper tag holders

1. Cut medium or heavy gauge copper wire to a 13-inch length.

2. Roll the top 8 inches into a spiral. Leave the remaining 5 inches pointed straight down as the stem. You should have a shape that resembles a fiddlehead.

3. Write the name of the plant on a piece of stiff paper or board. Tuck it into the spiral. Outdoor tags should be laminated or printed with indelible marker on thin plastic.

REINVENT

salvage chic

Make junk work for you. Some junk is cool and adds charm and excitement to a boring garden. The best junk can be kitschy or have a feeling of history.

- Scatter bits of broken porcelain as decorative container mulch.
- Sink used wine bottles into the ground neck down to create a path way of colorful circles of glass. It's sturdy and can take the weight of foot traffic.
- Line up broken bricks as a border for your garden bed.
- Construct a wind chime from dug-up rusty nuts and bolts.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Additional inspiration and content for magazine prototype from the following Web sites and magazines:

http://www.gardendesignmag.com
http://www.hortmag.com
http://www.mriplus.com
http://www.organicgardening.com
http://www.taunton.com/finegardening/index.asp
Container Gardens magazine, Summer 2004, Summer 2005
Garden Gate magazine, February 2005
Horticulture magazine, April 2004
Organic Gardening magazine, April/May 2005
Rodale Homegarden Solutions, Spring 2005