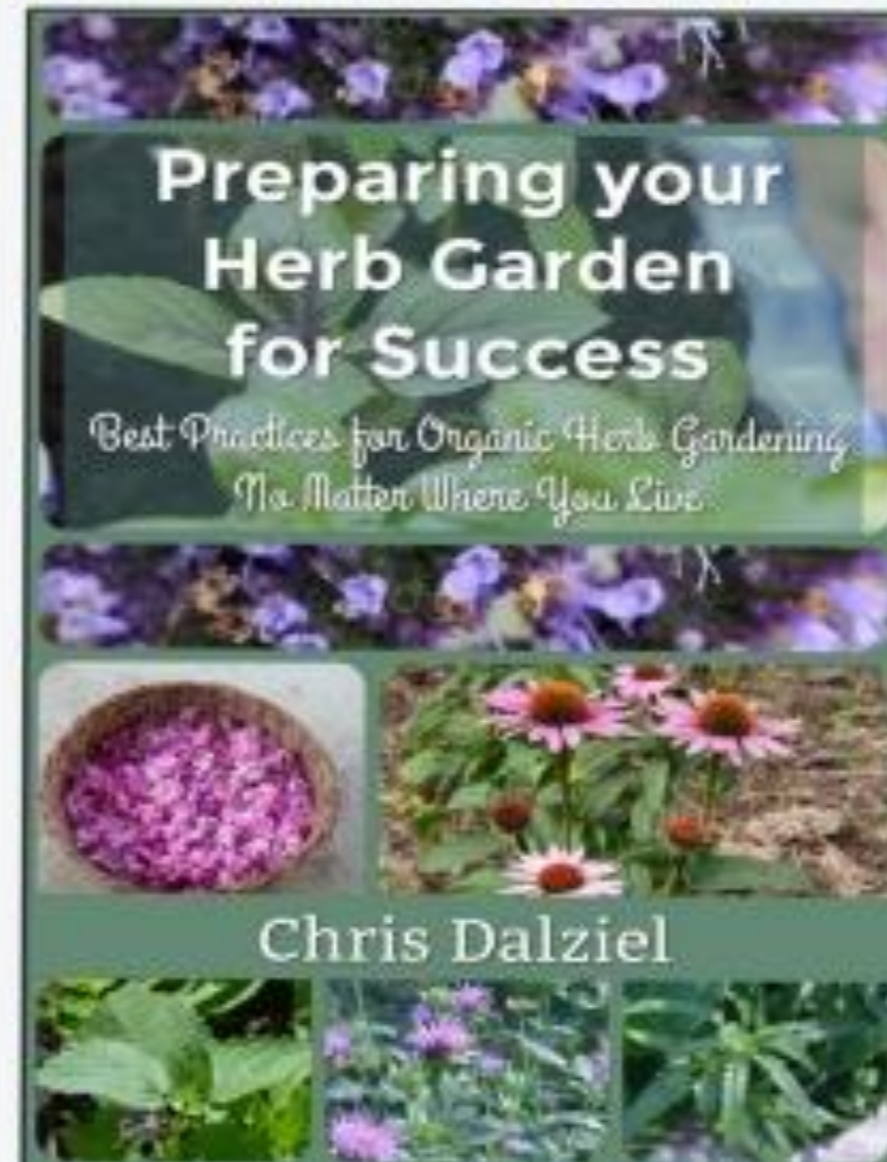


**Module 1**  
Preparing  
Your  
Herb Garden



**01**

# Preparing Your Herb Garden



## LESSON 01

# In This Lesson, You Will Learn:

- What your plant hardiness or growing zone is?
- How many frost free days you have
- How to determine your soil type

## LESSON 01

# In This Lesson, You Will Learn:

- How to Measure Sun Density
- Organic Soil Amendments to use
- Irrigation practices



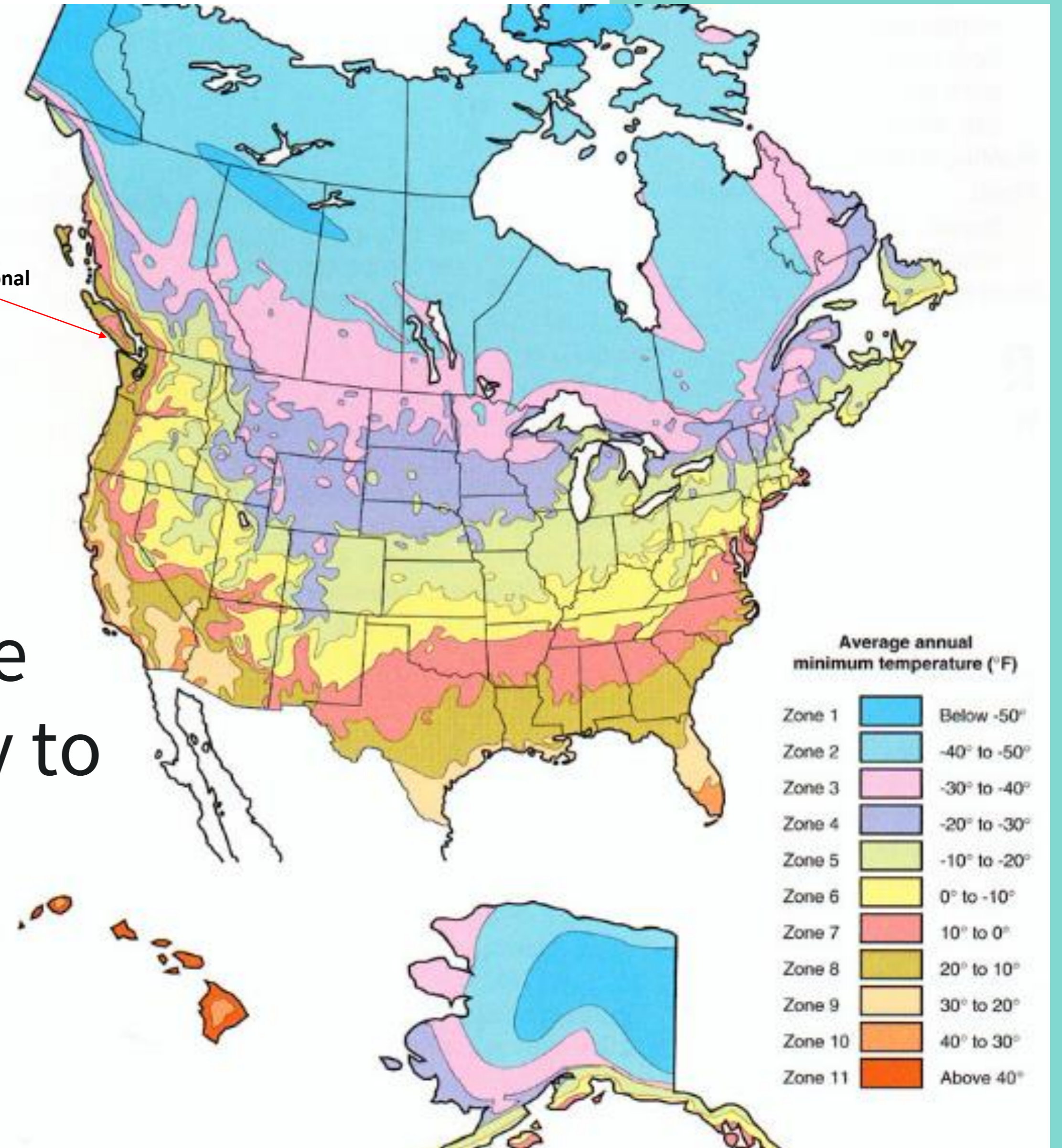
# 01

Your growing zone is defined by your lowest expected winter temperature.

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The USDA plant hardiness zone values are used internationally to determine Hardiness zones.

Canada / USA International  
Border





# Worldwide Plant Hardiness Zones



Plant Hardiness Zone





# To Determine Your Plant Hardiness Zone:

- Know your lowest minimum temperatures from the last 25 years in your area.
- Determine how often your winter temperatures reach this low.
- Determine your average minimum low temperatures.

# **When is Knowing YOUR Plant Hardiness Zone important?**

- **When you are planting fruit trees, shrubs, or ornamental trees.**
- **When you are planting perennials**
- **When you need to determine the overwintering capacity of your plants**
- **When reading seed catalogs**



**What is your  
plant hardiness  
zone: \_\_\_\_\_**





**02**

**How many frost free days do  
you have?**

Your frost-free growing season is determined by the number of days between

- Your last frost date in Spring AND
- Your first frost date in Fall

The actual time will vary year to year.

# 50% chance of frost after last frost day

Add additional 2 weeks to Last Frost Date for Certainty or provide protection.

*This is averages: Your own site may vary*

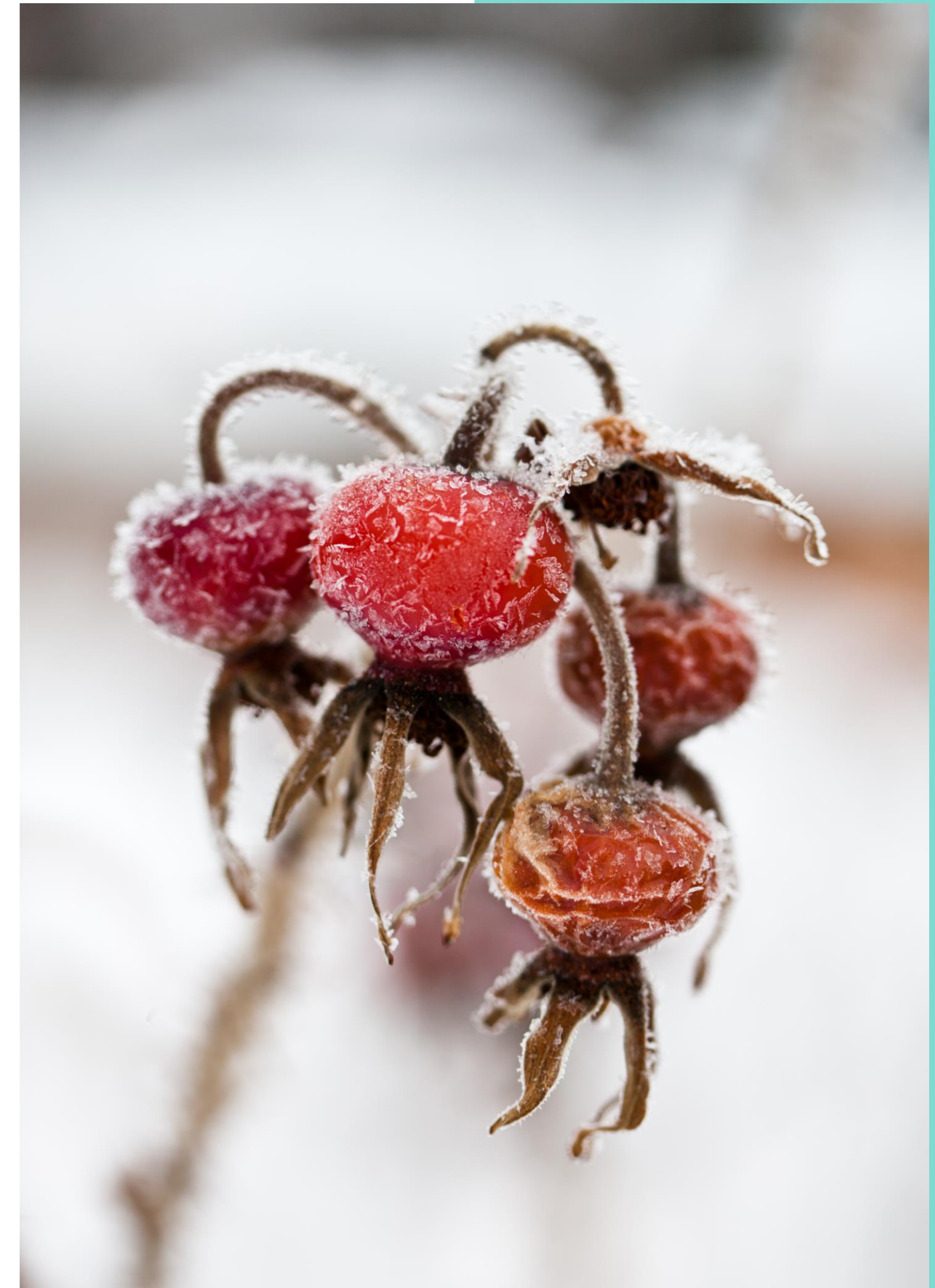
USDA ZONE	LAST FROST DATE	FIRST FROST DATE
1	June 1-30	July 1-31
2	May 16-31	Aug 1-31
3	May 1-15	Sep 1-30
4	April 16-30	Oct 1-15
5	April 1-15	Oct 16-31
6	Mar 16-30	Nov 1-15
7	Mar 1-15	Nov 16-30
8	Feb 1-28	Dec 1-15
9	Jan 1-30	Dec 16-31
10	Rare or no Freeze	Rare or no Freeze



The number of  
frost-free days you have  
determines when you need  
to start your seeds.



**How many frost  
free days do you  
have? \_\_\_\_\_**





**03**

**What is your soil type?**



## **There are six main soil types:**

- Clay
- Sandy
- Silty
- Peaty
- Chalky
- Loamy



# Home Soil Test

- Take soil from various parts of your garden.
- Mix it together well.
- Take 1 cup and place it in a 1 quart mason jar.
- Fill the jar with water. Cap and shake.
- Let the soil settle out in the jar.







Photo ©Shelle Wells, Used with Permission

- Clay soil and sandy soil may need to be amended with organic matter
- Loam or peat may need pH adjustment
- Always provide annual increases in organic matter

**What is your soil  
type? \_\_\_\_\_**



**04**

## **Measure your Sun Density**

How much sun does your garden get in 24 hours?



## **In 24 hours:**

- Full sun – 6+ hours of sunlight
- Part sun – 3 to 5 hours of sunlight
- Shade – Less than 2 hours of sunlight



**The sun density will vary throughout your garden.**

**Action:** Create a sun map over 48 hours by measuring the amount of sun each area of your garden receives in Spring, Summer, and Fall.

**05**

**Organic soil amendments**

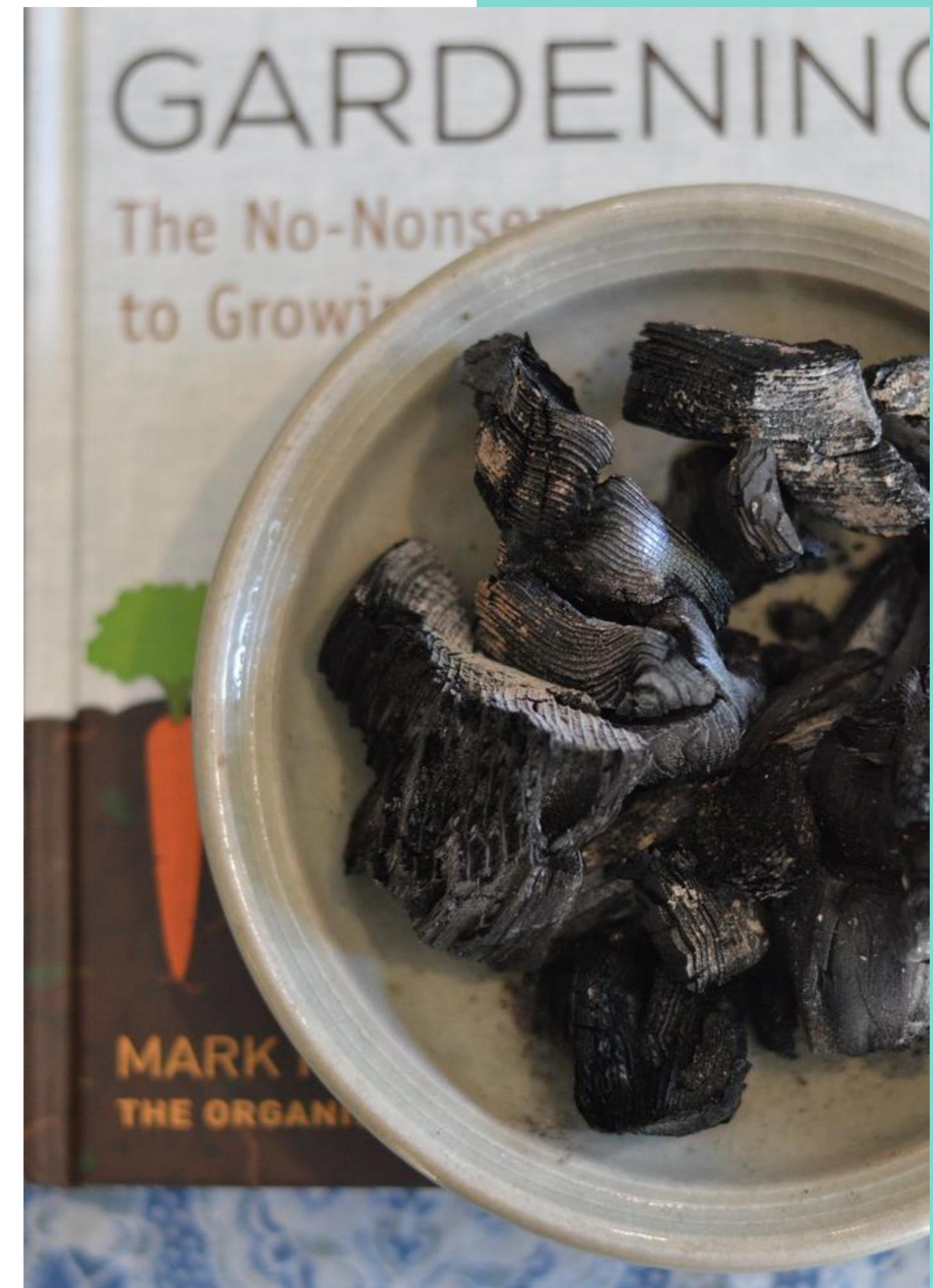


# Free Soil Amendments





- Coffee grounds (slightly acidic)
- Wood ash (alkaline)
- Biochar (neutral)
- Leaves, grass clippings, hay, straw (neutral)
- Wood chips (with leaves attached) (acidic)
- Composted manure (alkaline)
- Compost (depends)
- Worm Castings (neutral)





# Store-Bought Soil Amendments





- **Biochar**
- **Worm Castings**
- **Organic Potting Soil**
- **Peat Moss**
- **Lime**
- **Phosphate Rock**
- **Kelp Meal or Liquid Kelp**
- **Fish fertilizer or Fish Meal**



**06**

**Irrigation best practices**



# **How will you get water to your plants?**

Most vegetables need 2 inches of  
water per week



**Walking with a watering can may be tiring**





# Drip Irrigation

Offers the most efficient use of water, by putting water where it is needed most.

It requires the biggest investment in equipment and time to set up.

Saves time overall.







## Rotating garden sprinkler

- Smallest investment in equipment
- Requires even water pressure to operate
- May have dead zones
- Water 2 inches per week
- Least efficient in terms of water conservation.
- Can be time consuming to move the sprinkler around the garden





# Hand Watering

- Requires garden hose and spray nozzle.
- Small investment in equipment.
- Takes more hands on time than drip or sprinkler irrigation
- Allowed in most municipalities even when water restrictions are on
- Efficient use of water when done conscientiously.







I like to encourage people interested in gardening or planting to begin with a simple herb garden. Even if you live in a small apartment, you can have some herb pots.

**ANNA GETTY**

# WARNING

- Most beginning herb gardeners plant more herbs than they can take care of in a season. This results in frustration and disappointment.
- If this is your first season growing herbs, limit your herb gardening to just 10 different herbs.
- Learn their unique needs before expanding your herb collection. You will have greater success if you focus on a few herbs and learn to know them well.



## Module 1

# In This Lesson, You Learned:

- ✓ What your USDA Hardiness zone is
- ✓ How many frost free days you have
- ✓ What your soil type is and how to improve it.
- ✓ How to map your own garden for sun density
- ✓ Free and bought soil amendments to use in your garden
- ✓ What options you have for watering your herb and vegetable garden.

# Take Action Now

- Create a garden journal
- Write down your Plant Hardiness zone, number of frost free days, and soil type
- Add your solar density map
- Now you are ready to decide which herbs, flowers, and vegetables you can add to your garden.



## LESSON PREVIEW

# In The Next Lesson, You'll Learn:

- How to plant herbs seeds and how herbs need different treatment than annual vegetables
- When to start your herb seeds based on what you learned in this module
- What the moon has to do with planting and harvesting your garden.