

Garden in a flash

Spring means planting time. These ingenious shortcuts let you save time and money—and get straight to the good stuff



1 | Instant raised bed

The genius of the M Brace—four corner brackets into which you slide 2-by-4s—is that it allows even the tool-less to make a sturdy raised bed in about 10 minutes. \$165 per set; artofthegarden.net

WHO IT'S FOR Gardeners with tricky soil and limited space (the brackets anchor beds of from 2 to 12 feet per side).



2 | Balcony box

Small-space gardening just got better with the assemble-in-minutes MinifarmBox. Its notch-and-pin design is pretty too, almost like furniture. The rolling patio model (pictured) is easy to move with the sun. \$159 for 4-by-4 basic box; \$259 for 2-by-4 patio box; minifarmbox.com

WHO IT'S FOR Beginner gardeners as well as deck, patio, and balcony gardeners.



3 | DIY dream garden

Aloe Designs in Vancouver, B.C., offers landscaping services to gardeners who know what they want, but need some design handholding. After a phone consult, clients get a kit with detailed concept plans and blueprints, plant and hardscape lists, and local resources. From \$750 U.S.; aloedesigns.com

WHO IT'S FOR Experienced gardeners with a vision.



Get on the road Where to take your bike now

ANCHORAGE, AK ■ TONY KNOWLES
COASTAL TRAIL Cruise 10-plus miles of Cook Inlet views and birch glades; expect the occasional moose. dnr.alaska.gov

LONG BEACH PENINSULA, WA ■ DISCOVERY TRAIL This just-completed 8.5-mile trail starts in Ilwaco and skirts along the dunes, ending in Long Beach. funbeach.com

MARIN COUNTY, CA ■ NICASIO RESERVOIR LOOP Take in stunning Marin County scenery—Point Reyes National Seashore, postage-stamp towns, and some climbs—on the 32-mile loop. bikemap.net

SANTA MONICA, CA ■ SOUTH BAY BICYCLE TRAIL (SHOWN) Rent a cruiser and pedal along 22 sunny miles of palm trees, white sand beaches, and super-fun stops like the Venice Beach Boardwalk. santamonica.com

NEAR ZION NATIONAL PARK, UT ■ JEM TRAIL Sheep Bridge Road off State 9 leads to this 13-mile mountain-biking loop with great red rock views and a fast finish along the Virgin River. utahmountainbiking.com

PALISADE, CO ■ FRUIT LOOP CYCLING TOUR Park at Palisade Town Center Plaza and explore backroads lined with fruit stands, orchards, and wineries. palisadecoc.com

4 | Plug-in patio

With just a few mouse clicks, gardeners can get a professional plan for a sustainable landscape from L.A.-based Knibb Modular Garden. Make choices online, then receive a customized plan, detailed shopping list, and installation instructions; you can even get bid-ready construction blueprints. From \$550; knibbmodular.com

WHO IT'S FOR Experienced gardeners who can plug in the pieces themselves, or newbies who prefer to hire a contractor.

