<h3>IMPROVE YOUR GARDEN IN 7 QUICK WAYS</h3>

<p>Need ways to improve your garden but don’t know where to start? These seven quick tasks will make your garden look better in no time – perfect if you are planning a garden party this summer and don’t have time for a full-on garden makeover.</p>

<p>To improve your garden, it’s best to start with some ‘easy wins’ that instantly make the place look better. This will give you the motivation to tackle the longer-term tasks. There’s nothing like seeing results to spur on a gardener to greater things! </p>



<h4>1- Give your plants a lift</h4>

<p>Removing lower branches from trees and shrubs (sometimes called ‘crown lifting) can make them look a million dollars. It can improve their shape, make them look ‘cleaner’ and also help air circulate around the plant as well as creating opportunities to plant underneath them. Target branches that are touching the ground or spoiling the shape of the plant and remove them back to their source. Make sure your cutting tools are sharp and leave a clean cut.</p>

<h4>2- Top dress your pots</h4>

<p>Scrape away the top 5cm of compost from the tops of pots of established plants. This will remove weeds, moss and dead leaves. Then replace with a layer of fresh compost or a decorative mulch and then water the compost, unless it is already saturated. If you come across any stubborn weed seedlings or deep-rooted perennial weeds, use a thin bladed weeding tool or a garden knife to get them out. </p>

<h4>3- Smooth the cracks in your patio</h4>

<p>Use a patio weeding tool or even an old, rusty pair of secateurs to scrape away moss and weeds from the cracks in between your paving slabs. Once removed, fill in any gaps between the paving with a mix of three parts sharp sand to one part cement, and a little water to moisten the mix. Push it down the cracks with a pointing trowel, then smooth the surface with the trowel or an old piece of cut off hosepipe. </p>

<h4>4- Fill gaps in pots with instant colour</h4>

<p>Freshly planted containers may contain lots of bare earth while you wait for plants to mature. Instead of putting up with this empty scene, fill gaps with temporary colour by planting violas or primroses. These tough and brightly colourful plants will provide colour for as long as you want them too. </p>

<h4>5- Make a new flowerbed</h4>

<p>Most gardens have a bit of lawn to spare so dig some out and add some new plants to improve your garden.  Cut into the area of turf you wish to remove, using a spade. Then insert a  turfing iron or a spade horizontally into the turf to lift it up. Make cuts along the length of the area you are lifting, so that you move manageable pieces of turf at a time. Dig over the ground to loosen it up, and then add some new plants. Check the heights and spreads on the labels to make sure you will have enough room for the plants once they have matured. </p>

<h4>6- Clean your pots</h4>

<p>Fill a bucket with warm water and a little detergent, arm yourself with a scrubbing brush and clean the outside of your patio pots. This will give the patio a real lift and show off your prized pot plants to perfection. </p>

<h4>7- Get rid of old, tired plants</h4>

<p>Be ruthless if you have plants that aren’t pulling their weight. If you have old shrubs that lack vigour and have been limping along in the garden, bite the bullet and dig them up and you will have improved your garden instantly. Every plant has a sell by date and when you’ve replaced it with a healthy new plant you’ll wonder why you put up with the old one for so long! </p>

Ref:

http://www.theenglishgarden.co.uk/expert-advice/7-quick-ways-improve-your-garden/