
GROW YOUR OWN: GETTING STARTED

Growing your own food does not need to cost much.

Start small.

Growing your own food does not need to be difficult or time consuming.

Choose plants you will use and as many as you can easily take care of.

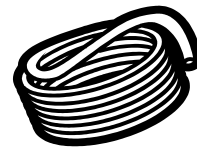


Gardening can help you get more physically active.

PLANT NEEDS

Growing plants is like taking care of your family. The plants need a place to live, they need food, sunlight and they need water.

Place	Containers/garden
Light	Sunlight
Air	
Nutrients	Food (compost, fertilizer)
Thirsty	Water (hose, watering can)
Soil	Soil or planting mixture



GARDEN DESIGN

Check off which of these plants you want to try to grow:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Green onion/chives (small) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eggplant (x large) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce (large) | <input type="checkbox"/> Kale/Collards (x large) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basil (x large) | <input type="checkbox"/> Chili Pepper (x large) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choi sum/bok choy (medium) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cherry Tomato (x large) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Green beans (pole/bush) (medium) | small/medium/large refers to container size |

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HOW MUCH ROOM DOES EACH PLANT NEED?

How much space do you need for each plant?

Plants can be divided into groups according to their space needs. Larger plants need more room, smaller plants less room.

Look at your checklist. Which crops are you going to plant? Use the list below to make sure you have enough containers or enough space in your garden:

Extra Large plants	Large plants	Medium plants	Small plants
1 plant per square foot or 5 gallon container	4 plants per square foot or 5 gallon container	9 plants per square foot or 5 gallon container	16 plants per square foot or 5 gallon container
Chili pepper Tomato Eggplant Kale/Collards Basil	Leaf lettuce Swiss chard	Bush beans Pole beans Choi sum Bok choy	Green onions Chives

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

You need a few simple tools and materials to get started.



Containers
Hand trowel
Planting mixture
Watering can
5 gallon buckets

Yard
Shovel or Fork
Soil conditioner/compost
Watering can or hosepipe



You do not need to go out and buy containers. Use what you have around the house. 5 gallon buckets make great containers.

GETTING STARTED

TOOLS AND MATERIALS...cont

Depending on what you are growing, you may also need:

- String or twist ties
- Poles (4'-6' long, for tomato/beans to climb on as they grow)



LOCATION

Four things to think about when deciding where to put your garden or containers:



1. Close to your house for convenience



2. An area that gets 6-8 hours of sunlight each day

3. Clear of trees and shrubs that may shade your plants

4. Where it will not flood after heavy rain



CONTAINERS

Choosing a container:

- Wooden containers are susceptible to rot.
- Cheap plastic pots may deteriorate in sunlight.
- Avoid containers with narrow openings (less than 3").



Pots from 6 to 10 inches in diameter and height work well for green onion, parsley and herbs.

For most vegetable crops such as tomatoes, peppers and eggplant, you will find 5-gallon containers are the most suitable size. They are fairly easy to handle and provide adequate space for root growth.

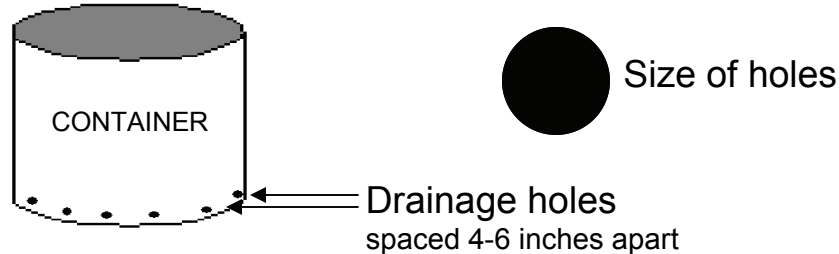


Containers I have at home:

GETTING STARTED

PREPARING CONTAINERS

Good drainage is needed for crops to grow well. You will need to make drainage holes in the bottom or side of the container. It is best to put the drain holes along the side of the container, about 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch from the bottom. Holes should be 1/2 inch across. Holes should be 3 - 6 inches apart. If available, put some gravel, pebbles or small stones in the bottom of your pot.



PLANTING MIXTURE

For your plants to grow well, the soil or planting mixture must:

- Allow **air** near the roots (drainage)
- Hold some **water**
- Provide some **nutrients** (food)

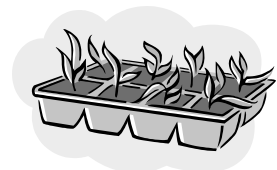


Growing or planting mixes are best suited for vegetable container gardening. You can use soil, but the quality varies a lot and often it doesn't drain well in containers.

If you are planning to use containers, you can buy ready mixed planting mixtures from the store or garden center. Commercially prepared potting soil is much easier to purchase and use. Look for bags of 'potting mix'. **You don't want 'compost'**. If you want to mix your own potting mixture contact your local Cooperative Extension Office for more information.

PLANTING YOUR SEEDS

Fill the container $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ full of a good potting mix. Cover the vegetable seed to a depth of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (as deep as seed is wide) to make sure of good germination.



The seeds should be started in a warm area that gets plenty of sunlight. Remember to water your seeds every day. The potting mix should feel damp. It will take about 4 to 8 weeks before your plant is big enough to transplant into the garden or final container.

Bring one container to the next class on _____ at _____ pm/am
(preferred size 6-10 inches)