

BE SELF-SUSTAINABLE

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Growing a garden can do more than provide tasty produce. Gardening can improve your health, save you money, and even boost your mood!

TOP 5 BENEFITS OF GROWING YOUR OWN FOOD

- 1. Improve your family's health.** Eating more fresh fruits and vegetables is one of the best things you can do to keep your family healthy. Growing your own keeps them accessible and fresh, which is when vitamins are at their highest levels.
- 2. Save money on groceries.** Growing your own is cheaper than buying at the grocery store and if you learn to dry, can, and freeze your produce, it can last beyond the growing season.
- 3. Reduce your environmental impact.** Growing your own produce reduces the use of fossil fuels and the resulting pollution that comes from transporting produce from all over the world.
- 4. Get outdoor exercise.** Planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting add functional activity to your day. Gardening is also a great way to relax, de-stress, centre your mind, and get fresh air and sunshine.
- 5. Enjoy better-tasting food.** The flavour of a homegrown tomato wins over the taste of a store-bought one any day. If it tastes better, you and your family will be more likely to eat the fresh, healthy produce that you know your bodies need.



What to Plant and When

Once warm temperatures arrive, and there's no threat of frost, it's time to plant! Warm soil allows for quick germination and thriving plants. This doesn't end with a first crop! As we move into the late summer months, secondary crops will keep your garden pumping out vegetables well into the fall. Fall crops can be as productive as your main early spring plantings!

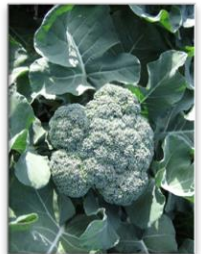
MAY & JUNE

- Beans
- Beets
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Herbs
- Melons
- Peppers
- Peas
- Summer Squash
- Tomatoes



JULY & AUGUST

- Beans
- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Kale
- Lettuce
- Peas
- Radishes
- Spinach



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PLANNING, PREPARING, AND PLANTING YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN

Step 1: Planning

To enjoy a lush summer garden full of produce, you've got to make sure your seeds have the best possible growing environment. Taking some time to plan will make all the difference. The two most important factors to consider are space and the types of fruit, vegetables, and herbs you want to plant. Get to know your plants. Tomatoes, green peppers, potatoes, and onions can be grown in a pretty small space. Peas, beans, squash, melons, and pumpkins need several feet to spread out and grow properly. Read the back of the seeds packet to learn how much planting space is needed.

Step 2: Preparation

Loosen the soil with a garden rake, hoe, or shovel and add some kind of organic matter (composted manure works great!) to the existing soil. Ideally, you want to loosen the soil to 12-18 inches deep. You may need to add water to make the soil easier to work. Once the ground is ready, spread roughly 4-6 inches of organic matter on top of the loosened soil. Let it sit on top for a few days and then work it into the rest of the soil.

Step 3: Planting

Different plants need to be planted at different depths in the soil, but a general rule is to plant seeds at a depth that is twice their diameter. You'll find that the smallest seeds will be planted just beneath the surface. Plant the seeds in a row 4-5 inches apart with each row planted 2-4 feet apart to avoid overcrowding. To extend your harvest, seeds such as lettuce, peas, carrots, and radishes can be planted every 2-3 weeks to ensure that you have enough to get you through the entire summer and even into early fall!



"The single greatest lesson the garden teaches is that our relationship to the planet need not be zero-sum, and that as long as the sun still shines and people still can plan and plant, think and do, we can, if we bother to try, find ways to provide for ourselves without diminishing the world. "

Michael Pollan, The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals

Sources: www.sparkpeople.com
www.ufseeds.com
www.prevention.com