

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to: Start a Garden

Growing a garden at home reaps many benefits like producing food that is healthier and more beautiful and tastes better than that sold in stores, and it saves money. Home gardens can range in size and can thrive if placed in the right conditions, so where to begin?

Picking the right location:

1. Sun - Most vegetables require full sun, so regardless of if you are planning an entire garden plot or a patio pot garden, be sure the area receives at least six hours of direct sunlight a day.

2. Soil - The plants will feed from the soil they grow in and are bound to grow better if grown in an area with good soil. Check the soil by conducting a soil test to determine if the soil is acidic, neutral or alkaline. Soil test kits are sold at garden centers. You can also amend the soil with compost which can be homemade or purchased and will add needed nutrients to the soil.

3. Drainage - Vegetables require lots of water but ensure the area you plant them in has good drainage and does not sit in a lower area of the yard or near a slope that may lead to standing water and rot.

How big should I grow my garden?:

For beginners, start small until you learn the ropes. The amount of people your garden will feed is a good indicator. A beginning plot like 16X10 will feed a family of four



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throughout the season with some leftover for canning, selling or gifting to friends. If a full garden plot seems daunting, start with a container garden placed on the patio where you limit one plant per pot until you feel more comfortable advancing to a home garden.

Planning the garden layout:

Gardens are most commonly grown in rows, and if new gardeners decide to grow their vegetables in rows as well, be sure to space plants far enough apart to allow for good air circulation, prevent overcrowding and allow enough space for walking between the rows. Planting in rows also allows for space to hand-weed within the vegetables. A good rule of thumb is to leave at least 18 inches between rows. Plan for your taller vegetables to be planted on the north side of the garden, so their shadow doesn't cast over the shorter items.



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Beginner plants to grow in your first garden:

Until new gardeners get the hang of gardening, they should grow easier vegetables so they can reap the benefits while learning the ropes. Easier vegetables to grow include tomatoes, zucchini, beans, lettuce, radishes, peppers, carrots, cabbage and more. Vegetables like tomatoes, peppers and squash continuously provide a harvest throughout the season, feeding the family until summer is over. Other plants like carrots and radishes only produce once. Choose a variety of high-yielding plants and one-time-harvest plants to feed your family all summer long.



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Tools to get started:

Planting and keeping up with a garden requires a lot of work, and a good set of garden tools can make the process easier. A few tools to be kept in every gardener's shed include gloves, pruners, a trowel, a shovel, a garden knife and a rain gauge.

You can find everything you need to start a garden from tools to seeds on our website at ufseeds.com!



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