



Grow Your Own Food Anywhere

growyourownfoodanywhere.com

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Do all of the food recalls scare you? Do you want to grow your own food but think you can't because you live in a rent house or an apartment? Do you have physical limitations that keep you from gardening? You can grow your own food in any of these circumstances.

We all thought at one time that the only way to garden was to get a rototiller, dig up the dirt and start planting seeds. There are quite a few different options today. You can do a conventional garden such as described above. Or, you can build raised garden beds. If you want to maximize your space even more you can do square foot gardening in your raised bed.

If you have the space you can build a greenhouse. There are many kits available today. Or, you can build your own with readily available materials. You can use a greenhouse in several different ways in the winter. You can heat it and grow vegetables out of season. Or, you can do a cool greenhouse (unheated) and grow cool weather crops. You can grow in containers, in raised beds, or in hydroponic or aquaponic systems. You can also grow warm weather crops in the summer by cooling your greenhouse. It is pretty impractical trying to grow cool weather crops in a summer greenhouse. The cost to cool would far outweigh the value of the food grown.

If you are renting your home or apartment you can grow inside or on a balcony. You can use containers or aquaponic or hydroponic systems. You can also grow using a plant stand with fluorescent lighting indoors. You can even set pots with herbs on a sunny windowsill.

Getting Started

Planting Outside



The first thing you should do is get organized and get educated about your growing zone. You can find which USDA zone you are in by doing a simple online search for USDA growing zones. This is what determines the timing of your planting outside. Of course the weather will be a factor in when you plant as well. If you are planting tomatoes, peppers, beans etc in the Spring you do not want to plant until all danger of frost has passed. These plants just will not survive a frost. Another good way to determine when to plant items is to visit a local nursery. Talk to the owners and find out what plants should be planted at the time. A pretty good clue is to look at the plants that they currently have in their nursery. A good, local nursery is not going to be selling plants

out of season. They will more than likely also have seeds available if you are interested in starting your own seedlings.

Next you should determine the type of garden you will plant outside. Find a good sunny location and mark it out. Make a plan of what plants you are going to plant. I keep a yearly drawing of my garden so I can remember different varieties I am trying and where they were planted. That way you can grow the same plant next year if you like it. Also, you will be able to rotate your crops with the aid of this drawing. Get your plants or seeds together. Don't forget that you want to be able to get a hose to this location to water or set up a drip irrigation system. If you are just getting started there is no need to buy a rototiller. You can rent these at rental facilities and even at some of the big box stores. Get your feet wet first before making a huge investment in a tiller. Hint: If you can find a rear tine tiller they are much easier to operate than a front tine tiller. Find out if there are any specific needs in your local area such as making hills. I moved from the North to the South where the drainage is not as good. In the North we just took stakes and ran a string between them to set our rows. We learned the first year in the South after our garden got flooded that we needed to make "hills", or mound the dirt up so that the rain would drain out. This is something you can find out from your locals. Another good place to get information is at plant sales. Sometimes the local Master Gardeners will have a booth and be available to answer your gardening questions.

If you are making raised garden beds you can set them before or after you use the rototiller. There are many different materials to make these. You can use pressure treated boards. The manufacturer of YellaWood states that their wood is safe for this purpose. You can use recycled plastic boards, cinder blocks, galvanized tin, pretty much anything that will hold the dirt in. Square foot gardening is a system created by Mel

Bartholomew. It is done in the raised beds. You can get a higher yield in a smaller area using this method.

Planting in a Greenhouse



If you are planting in a greenhouse you need to determine what conditions your plants need and then you will have to supply the systems to create these conditions. You should also lay out your interior design before you build your greenhouse. If you are using an existing greenhouse you will have to design your interior around what you have. If you are growing in containers you will probably have them on benches. You want to make sure that you are able to place your containers in such a way that they are not touching. You do not want to overcrowd them. Also, do not use a bench over 2' wide that you can only work from one side. A center bench can be up to 4' wide so that you can comfortably reach the plants to work on them and harvest. Some will choose to build raised garden beds and plant directly in the soil. If you are growing in a lean to greenhouse we do not recommend using a raised bed up against your home. You are just asking for trouble if you do this. For the hydroponic systems make sure that you have enough room to

walk between the systems to harvest. Or, if you are doing a gutter type system you may be able to pick these up and move them to another area to harvest.

Every one of these growing methods will require water. We use a frost proof hydrant inside the greenhouse. We find that this is very convenient and we do not have to worry about freezing or hauling water to the greenhouse in the winter. You will need a heater to grow warm weather crops in the winter. These are available in electric, propane or natural gas. It is suggested to use something other than the electric if at all possible. If you only have electric be sure to protect the heater from any water source. We all know that water and electric just don't mix. There are also some solar methods which may be used. You will need a ventilation system if you plan on growing vegetables in the greenhouse in the summer. You may also need additional cooling depending on your location or your plants needs. These are just a few basics needed for greenhouse growing.

Planting in Containers



There are so many different containers to plant in. There are planters designed specifically for tomatoes, there are vertical planters that will use less space, you can use terra cotta pots, or get creative and use recycled materials. One year we used window boxes set on recycled steps for our herb garden. It didn't take up much room at all and it was right outside of our kitchen on our porch. You can start small by growing some herbs in pots on a sunny window sill. There are also plant stands designed for indoor use that have fluorescent lighting. Or, you can make your own stand by attaching lighting underneath each shelf. Small hydroponic systems can be set on a porch or inside a home. If you have them on a porch you should make sure that the rain cannot get in the system. This will throw off the balance of nutrients in the system. If you are unable to bend and work in a garden there are growing systems that are elevated. These are typically workable from a standing height or from a chair height depending on the needs.

When using containers, you want to be sure to use a good potting soil or soilless mixture that will drain well and maintain moisture. If you will need to move these try to get a system with wheels on them. The biggest problem of growing inside is the lighting. But, fluorescent bulbs work really well and there are quite a few inexpensive LED systems available at this time.

What can you grow

Vegetables outside

You can grow just about any vegetable that you see at your grocers outside. That is if you have the proper conditions. You must be sure to plant warm weather crops in the Spring after the last frost. The cool weather plants will go in the ground in the early or late fall depending on your location. Seed packets will have a lot of information on them regarding when to plant, how deep to plant, how far apart to plant, days to germination and days to maturity. Also, a lot of your local extension offices will have a free planting guide with suggested times and varieties for your local area. You can find your local extension office by doing an online search for extension office "my city". There is a comprehensive guide for our state. I have been using this for years. I still have a paper copy somewhere, but there is now an online version available.

Favorites in the Spring include (but are not limited to) tomatoes, peppers, melons, eggplant, herbs such as basil and sage, corn, beans, and zucchini. Cool weather crops include cabbage, pak choi, cilantro, radishes, carrots, lettuce, beets, broccoli and cauliflower.

Vegetables in a greenhouse

You can grow the following in an unheated greenhouse in the winter - carrots, beets, radishes, turnips, onions, garlic, parsnips, endive, radicchio, kale, swiss chard, spinach, arugula, cabbage, collard greens, mustard greens, onions and garlic.

You can grow the following in a heated greenhouse in the winter - tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, beans, corn if you have enough room,

basil, sage, etc. You can also grow these same vegetables in a cooled greenhouse in the summer.

Vegetables in Containers

Microgreens are probably one of the easiest things to grow inside. They have completed their cycle from seed to harvest in about 10 days. These are a great addition to salads, as a standalone salad, or as a topping for sandwiches. Herbs such as chives, basil, sage, cilantro, thyme, mint and rosemary are easy to grow inside. Lettuces are also a good indoor crop. If you have the room you can grow tomatoes. There are many varieties of "patio tomatoes" available. These are particularly suited for container gardening. Be sure to supply your tomato with a large enough pot and plenty of light. Root crops such as carrots and radishes will grow indoors. Just be sure to give them deep enough pots. You can also grow beans and cucumbers in containers if you have the room to trellis them. Or, you may choose to use bush beans. There are kits for growing your own mushrooms indoors. Strawberries, peppers, and scallions can also be grown inside. There are some trees such as lemon and mandarin orange that will also do well inside. These will be marked for container growing.

In Conclusion

So, as you can see there is no reason not to grow your own vegetables and fruits. With some time, effort, a few dollars and some ingenuity, you can grow your own food anywhere.

This free ebook is courtesy of growyourownfoodanywhere.com