



Grow your own fruits and vegetables in any space

Here are 10 tips to help you get started:

- 1. Choose your site wisely.** Pick a spot that gets at least 6-8 hours of sun every day, has healthy soil and good drainage. If you plan to community garden, your site should also be easy to access, visible and safe.
- 2. Check your soil.** You'll need soil that is healthy and rich in nutrients. Is it largely clay, sand or silt? What's the pH level? It's easy to do a home soil analysis. Simply purchase a kit at your local hardware or gardening centre. Plus, you can improve all soil types with compost.
- 3. Plan your space.** No space is too small! Vegetable beds can be any shape or size so long as you can reach the middle to weed, plant or harvest. If space is limited, consider growing vegetables in containers or mix your vegetables with ornamental plants. Many vegetables are very attractive and can substitute for annuals.
- 4. Choose your plants.** Select vegetables that are easy to grow such as tomatoes, green beans, green onions, lettuce, swiss chard, radishes, cucumbers and zucchini. Most importantly, pick vegetables that you'll want to eat when it's time to harvest!
- 5. Decide on seeds and seedlings.** Garden centres offer a variety of seedlings that are easy to transplant. You can also start seeds indoors, while others should be sown directly into your garden. Check the planting instructions for best results.
- 6. Plant at the right time.** Don't be fooled by a few warm days. Plant by the expected last date of frost, not by the weather. When in doubt, consult the package for direction.
- 7. Water efficiently.** Use a rain barrel to collect free rainwater for your garden. You'll save on water costs and your plants will thank you for the naturally soft rainwater.
- 8. Go natural with organic pesticides and herbicides.** Go online to find natural recipes and discover companion plants that can support each other to reduce pests and enhance pollination, nutrient uptake and food production.
- 9. Make your own compost.** If you've got space, consider using a backyard composter. Re-using your fruit and veggie scraps will create nutrient-rich soil and reduce needless waste.
- 10. Have fun at harvest!** The best part of growing your own food is harvest time. You now have fresh, organic produce to enjoy with friends and family. Try new recipes and celebrate a job well done!

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Foods that are good for the environment are also good for your health

Here are 10 tips to healthy eating:

- 1. Eat locally grown food.** Local food is more likely to be fresh and brimming with nutrients. And, local food doesn't have to travel as far to get to you, which cuts down on the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.
- 2. Look for foods that carry an eco-label.** Foods labelled organic or local and sustainable (such as those certified by Local Food Plus) come from farmers who work hard to protect the woodlands and marshes that help clean local water supplies. Fertilizers and pesticides made from fossil fuels and petrochemicals also add to global warming, and may leave harmful residues in your body.
- 3. Shop when you're not hungry.** It's estimated that people in affluent countries throw away between 20 to 30 per cent of the food they buy, often unopened. When you shop local and buy in smaller quantities, you eat fresh and waste less.
- 4. Enjoy fish that aren't threatened by over-fishing or metal pollution.** Check websites such as seachoice.org to make healthy and sustainable choices.
- 5. Support Fair Trade when purchasing products such as coffee, tea, chocolate and bananas.** Help producers in developing countries get paid fairly. Fair trade growers also commit to higher environmental standards, such as limiting the use of pesticides and protecting forested areas.
- 6. Drink more water, less pop.** You'll save on empty calories, consume fewer corn-based sweeteners, and reduce the use of plastic bottles which may leach contaminants into your beverages.
- 7. Enjoy fresh, unprocessed foods such as oranges, apples and eggs.** No food comes naturally swaddled in plastic, tin, cardboard or tetrapak. Unnatural and excessive packaging creates pollution when it's made and disposed. Foods that are packaged may also contain additives to extend their shelf life.
- 8. Eat less meat.** Eating smaller portions of higher-quality meats reduces your risk of chronic diseases, and supports farming methods that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as feeding livestock grass rather than corn or soy.
- 9. Try the hundred mile diet and the hundred yard diet.** You can taste the difference fresh nutrients make and shrink your carbon footprint at the same time. Grow something in your own pantry (sprouts), on a windowsill (herbs) or in a backyard or community garden near you.
- 10. Variety is the spice of life!** Sample the wide variety of plant-based foods that keep people from other cultures healthy, and help maintain ancient and ethnocultural food traditions.