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A Modern Victory Garden

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It has come to most people?s attention the sad state of our food affairs in these United States. We question the sources of our food each time we eat, what is the health of our foods? We have become aware of the chemicals placed on our foods, contamination in our soil, our water and the genetic modifications to our seeds. The question always arises, what is safe to eat? Should we be eating only organic or grown locally, farm raised, hydroponic, what do all these terms really mean.

I think all these questions lead us back to the good old fashion ?Victory Garden?, growing food at home. The size of the space does not matter, search around to even find a small area next to the back fence of your property or along a driveway. Find a sunny spot in your yard that gets at least 6 hours of sun light a day and start dreaming of fresh, tasty, healthy, home grown produce.

Containers are one of my favorite ways to plant a garden. Container gardening is very versatile, different sizes and shapes of containers will give a nice variety to your garden. Containers can be moved from one location to another sunnier spot as the summer progresses. I find harvesting produce from a container is much easier on folks with bad backs.

I like to use 14 inch containers or larger, this gives enough room for large plants and more food production. I like to mix and match the size of my pots, 12 inch pots for smaller plants such as lettuces, spinach, herb?s, and larger pots for large plants as tomato?s, squash, beans. Just remember to use pots with drainage wholes and good potting soil.

In a 14 inch container you can plant 6 heads of lettuce, or 1 large patio tomato and 4 basil plants, 1 zucchini and 1 oregano plant & 1 basil plant, 2 bell peppers and 2 thyme plants, along with inner-plantings of radishes, chard, spinach and more. I have used the theory of the square foot gardening method by Mel Bartholomew, which can be found on line at http://www.squarefootgardening.org [1]. They offer so many wonderful options, for gardening in small spaces. Containers mixed with vegetables, herbs and flowers are always a lovely touch on a front porch, deck or by a pool.

I?ve been harvesting lettuces and spinach for a few weeks, these seeds were started in my containers in the basement window sill during a mid January snow storm. This week I planted seeds in more pots with lettuces and spinach, which will be ready to harvest in 40 days. Getting a head start on spring by starting some containers inside is very helpful.

Outside on my deck I have 18 inch pot with snow pea?s sprouting up; I?ve used bamboo stakes and an embroidery hoop to hold the bamboo stakes into a tee-pee shape. When the snow peas are done producing by the middle of June, I?ll plant some cucumbers in the container and use the bamboo stakes to hold up the cucumber vines.

Growing your own healthy foods is easy, look around your yard for some nice gardening spaces. Sit down and draw up some plans as to how you will start your garden, this can be a fun project to treat yourself and your family to home grown goodness. We would love to see; visit and write about your gardens please feel free to send along any questions or comments that you might have about gardening. New Jersey is known as the ?Garden State? and Burlington County has the most fertile farm soils in the state, so let?s see your gardens grow!

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Image (optional):

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