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Grow your own food in 3 easy steps

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It?s cold outside. I don?t know about you.. but I hunger for some warmth and sunshine. I?m longing to see some green leaves on my fruit trees.. a sign of spring.. I get caught in daydreams of white and pink blossoms.. but unfortunately, I have to wait a little longer.

But that?s ok. Because these cold months are great for planning gardens and thinking about what you want to grow where.

Maybe you thought about growing something this year. It might be the prospect of delicious juicy tomatoes, or maybe becayse you would like to have a little family project. Either way, don?t be intimidated by complicated gardening techniques and equipment. All you need is these 3 simple steps.

Step 1. Pick a spot and decide what to grow

One of the most important things you need to grow your own food is **sunshine**. Pick a spot with as much sunshine as possible. Think about how the sun fills your garden in summer. A spot with full sunshine from 6-8 hours is ideal.

If you already have some flowerbeds on that spot, you could make some to grow food. If you have no soil on that spot right now (like grass or tiles), you might want to start growing in pots/containers or raised beds. Estimate the amount of space you will be able to use. Take your vertical space into account too. You can grow great stuff on fences or walls.

Now it?s time for the fun part. Decide on what to grow. Ask your family members too. What do they like to eat? Pick a few things that you eat often. Leafy greens like lettuce and spinach are easy to grow. If you want tomatoes, make sure you pick a variety that fits your garden. Some tomatoes can become monsterly big, but you also have varieties that stay small and can be grown in containers (I?m growing Minibel this year). Make sure you take advantage of your vertical space, beans are great to grow vertically.

Comfort yourself in this dreary cold weather by thinking about all the wonderful food you are going to grow, once the sun comes out. Learn a bit about the plants you want to grow. Order a seed catalogue, take a seat in your comfortable chair with a nice cup of tea and dream away.

If you really want to get into it, use a garden planner. I?ve used the GrowVeg Garden Planner for my gardens and I really recommend it. It?s easy, fast and contains loads of helpful information about different varieties. It also generates a helpful list when to plant your fruits and vegetables according to your own local frost dates. They have a free 30-day trial, so just give it a go. I guarantee you?ll have some fun!

[2]

Step 2. Take care of your soil

Your plants will reward you with an abundant harvest if you take good care of your soil before planting. You need to add as much organic matter as possible. Considering you might not have your own home-made compost yet, no worries! You can buy compost, but make sure it?s good quality. You can also use AGED manure coming from cows or chickens. I used aged cow manure mixed with potting soil in one of my beds last year and it worked great!

[3]

Compost and manure add nutrients to the soil and give it a light and fluffy texture. That?s what you?re looking for. It holds moisture and air, two things your plants like.

If you?re starting with containers, pots or raised beds you should consider using Mel?s Mix [4]. He?s the man behind Square Foot Gardening. It contains moisture very well, but it can be a little pricey to start with. You?ll need 1/3 Compost, 1/3 Peat and 1/3 Vermiculite (which you can find on the internet or large construction stores).

Taking a little care of your soil is a crucial step. You can?t grow great food on bags of normal black soil or potting soil alone. Think about how you can add as much organic matter to your soil as possible on your budget. Other easy, fun ways to mix up some incredible soil that take a little bit more patience are lasagna gardening [5] and no dig gardening.

Step 3. Start planting!

Once your soil is ready you can start planting! Make sure you sow or plant at the right time. Some seeds only come alive with a certain temperatures. Most seed packets come with planting instructions.

If you want to grow mediterranean vegetables like tomatoes, peppers and aubergines you can sow the seeds indoors and plant them after the danger of frost has disappeared (aka last frostdate). You can also buy the plants from your local garden center when the weather warmed up. But I like it to see the plants grow from virtually nothing. Yes, they confiscate your entire windowsill for a few weeks, but that?s okay. At least I can pick the exact variety I love.

[6]

When you start planting, show some respect for a plants privacy. I mean, give them some space. I made that mistake with my carrots when I started growing [7]. Tiny, tiny, tiny, TINY carrots. I know it?s hard, because there are so many seeds in a packet. But try to contain yourself, your carrots (and any other plants) will thank you for it.

Just one more little thing: make sure that you keep your tiny plants well watered. You should keep the soil moist, especially in the very beginning. Check on them everyday. If you give a little love, you?ll get an abundance of love in return.

If you stick to these 3 easy steps, your first gardening adventure is going to be amazing. But for now.. put on a nice warm sweater, dream away and think about all the great things that are going to happen when the sun comes out.

By www.growthefuturenow.com [8]

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