

YOUR SELF-SUFFICIENCY GUIDE FOR
**GROWING YOUR OWN
FOOD**

[FOR BEGINNERS]



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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO START YOUR OWN GARDEN

With the world in a state of confusion and fear, the fabric of our food chain supply is abruptly showing its weaknesses. Despite officials stating that there is plenty of everything, that simply isn't the case. Walk down a grocery aisle and you'll find plenty of missing items. The produce section, for the most part, is looking grim. Ontop of all of this, we are seeing prices for essentials increasing, exponentially.

This is not good for us.

In order to feel more food-secure, millions of people are now beginning to think about planting a garden to help relieve the pressure of both finding and affording fresh produce.

The issue for many is that we have been raised in a world where these skills were obsolete. We didn't need to know how to properly grow our own food because our food chain supply never failed us.

If you're looking to be more self-sufficient and grow your own food, there's good news. Growing your own food is totally doable. You'll just need a couple of tools and a basic understanding on how to cultivate your crops. You'll also need to experiment with what works best for you in the climate you live in.

In this ebook, you'll learn how to grow a bounty of food in small spaces. In order to start, you'll just need to do some planning and a little research. Continue reading to get your food growing journey started.





FIRST THINGS TO CONSIDER

1 You'll need to find out what **growing zone you are in first**.

This will tell you when you need to get your garden started as well as help determine which plants will grow best in your region.

This is an important bit of information for you to know. There is no point in trying to grow bananas if the tree can't grow in your region.

2 Now that you know which region you are in, visit this **website** to determine which plants thrive in your region.

It's also a good idea to join some groups on social media that can help novice gardeners to get started. Groups in your local area are priceless because they can teach you what works best in that area and you'll also potentially meet people who have extra seeds or plants that they are willing to share with you for a small price or even for free.





4 STYLES OF GARDENING

Determine where you will garden and which style of gardening will work the best for you. There are several styles of gardening outlined below:

1. Planting straight into the ground

This is a traditional form of gardening and it will work wonderfully if you have your own home and space for a garden. You also need to be lucky enough to have great soil. Midwesterners will likely have great soil -- especially those in Illinois, Iowa, and Indiana. These states are agricultural for a reason.





STYLES OF GARDENING (CONT'D)

2. Container gardens

This is a style that can suit just about anyone. Using small containers to plant veggies is a great way to control the soil by using potting soil, feeding your plants the nutrition they need, watering them regularly, and enjoying them on a balcony, patio, or window space inside your home. Just make certain that the sunlight is abundant. Your containers don't have to be elaborate in any way at all. Using leftover cans, plastic recyclables, etc are all fair game. You simply need to ensure that you add drainage holes to the bottoms so that your plant roots don't rot. Anything will work if it can have holes.

I've been using my dog food bags as pots to grow tomato plants in. The kind that more plastic than paper will hold damp soil and you can easily poke holes in the bottom. Tomatoes love them and you can even use them to grow potatoes by adding potatoes to the bottom, allowing them to grow through the soil, then adding more layers of dirt slowly. You repeat this process to slowly fill the bag and after a few weeks, simply cut a hole in the bottom side of the bag and you'll be able to pull potatoes out from the bottom as they mature. Container gardening also allows you to create vertical gardens in small spaces.





STYLES OF GARDENING (CONT'D)

3. Raised bed gardens

This refers to a method of using boxes as containers, built above the ground that you fill with soil and create a large container garden outside. These are wonderful for those in wheelchairs because the beds can be created at the perfect height and width to allow for easy access and make it possible for anyone to be able to have a garden. Even the person with the bad back that can't bend and stoop can garden with this method.

Cedar is a great material for these raised beds but many people get quite creative with making them, using anything from stacking old railroad ties to building more elaborate gardens out of lumber.





STYLES OF GARDENING (CONT'D)

4. Hydroponic gardens

This method requires no soil at all. It does require that you understand the concept well and you'll need some special equipment but some of it can be improvised. For example, the small growing basket that you must start your seed in can be made from old pudding cups or plastic solo cups by poking holes in the bottoms for the roots to grow, adding a growing medium to hold the small seedling in the top, such as sponge or paper towel that stays in place until the plant begins to grow and the roots spread down into the container and the plant grows large enough to stay in place on its own at the top of the container.

Many people use totes and cut holes to place many of the same plants in one container. Other people use smaller single-plant-sized containers. Some types of hydroponics call for using a water pump that supplies a continuous flow of water to the root base of the plants. Other methods simply allow the roots to touch the top of the water and as the water evaporates in the container, the roots will naturally stretch downward to reach it, thereby growing. This method actually uses less water than watering an outdoor garden each day and is very effective if you've got poor soil.





PREPPING YOUR CROPS

You've learned what can grow best in your region and you've decided on the type of garden that will work best for you. Now it's time to decide what to start first. Some types of plants will do best if you start them inside and allow them to germinate first and then go through a process we call 'hardening'. This simply means that they are strong enough to do well outside, no matter what comes their way.

Encouraging your sprouts to harden can be done by letting a fan blow on them on a low setting, gently. This causes them to naturally grow sturdier limbs and stalks. Let them grow indoors as long as three to four weeks after the sprout and gradually turn the fan a little higher until they are strong enough to stand erect. Now you can pot them outside or plant them directly into beds that are ready for them, raised or in the ground.





PREPPING YOUR CROPS (CONT'D)

Some plants do best if they are planted directly into place from seeds and should not be transplanted. These are primarily the root plants - carrots, turnips, rutabagas, and potatoes are these types of plants. These also are the ones that require soil and won't grow hydroponically. I'm not saying that you couldn't find a way, but it isn't very practical for most people.

There are other plants that do best in the ground or in very deep containers. Corn should be planted directly in the ground and won't do well in containers because it just isn't practical. One corn plant will produce 2-3 ears of corn. It's a plant that requires plenty of space as it grows 6+ feet tall, depending on the variety. That said, there are many varieties of corn that are heat tolerant and do well in soil that may not be suitable for other plants.





PROTECTING YOUR CROP

So now you have your seeds and you've sprouted the ones that needed to be. You've transferred those to the homes they'll continue growing in. You have sown your seeds directly into the soil on the things that will do best if left undisturbed.

Now you wait. This is the hard part.

You must be patient and you need to keep a watchful eye on your plants. When you have outdoor plants, you'll also have to deal with predators. Grasshoppers, grubs, corn borers, aphids, and many other creepy crawlers will wreak havoc on your garden. They can kill your plants, infiltrate your veggies inside of the pods, under the corn silks and cause you to lose a lot of produce.

You should check your plants daily and really scrutinize them closely. This is where your groups you've joined will come in handy. You can get tips to help deal with bugs. For example, aphids hate Dawn dish soap and you can spray that directly onto your plant leaves and kill them. You'll need to spray frequently. There are many things that you can do, naturally, to get rid of pests. You'll find that other gardeners are filled with ideas.





PROTECTING YOUR CROP (CONT'D)

Outdoor gardening can fall prey to rabbits, squirrels, and deer. If you are going to have an outdoor garden, you will want to take the time to securely fence it in with something that has holes (small enough to keep even a chipmunk out of it). You'll also want it to be very attentive if you live in an area prone to deer. There is nothing more heartbreaking than waking up, walking outside, and finding your garden trampled and picked clean or chewed to the ground.

Birds will go after berries, fruits, and even steal the stray green beans. Some gardeners use netting over the top of their berries, beans and so forth, just to keep the birds away. A good gardener finds a way to work with nature to minimize the losses.

Some losses truly are inevitable.

The best ways to mitigate damages is to distract your wildlife away from your own garden. In other words, create a small area that has sunflowers to keep them happy, add a few errant seeds to allow some food for the wildlife and make it easily accessible. When given a choice, they'll go after what is easy. It's also best to plant this charity crop as far away from your personal garden as possible. This is a great way to live in harmony. After all, they have to eat too, right?





THINGS YOU'LL NEED

Certainly, it depends on the method of gardening that you are choosing to do but there are some items that everyone needs.

A **good set of gardening gloves** is essential for keeping your hands free of blisters that can become pretty painful. If you are putting your hands in bags of potting soil or using a shovel to hand-turn soil, you need a great pair of gardening gloves.

If you are going to be planting outdoors, in the ground, you'll be spending a lot of time crawling around on your knees, both when planting and when weeding. Having a **great little pad** to save your knees will make all the difference in the world when it comes to being able to walk later. Sometimes it's a great idea to have a small stool that you can sit on when you are picking your crops. If you've got a big garden, you're going to spend a lot of time picking peas or green beans. It can take a long time to stoop over and look for the elusive little pods. Why kill your back when you can have a **handy little stool** that you can easily take to the garden with you?

Gardening tools are essential for making planting and potting easier. If you are container gardening on a patio, it is highly likely that a watering can is more practical for you than a hose. If you like your garden to be pretty and maybe you can't always water every day (or you're concerned about overwatering), you can consider using something that holds extra water and releases it into the soil gradually, as it is needed. These **handy glass globes** work perfectly for this and they are also pretty.





SOME PERSONAL NECESSITIES

Garden Drill Bit Auger - This handy little bit will allow you to drill nice-sized holes to drop bulbs in, plant trees, and just about anything that you need to plant deep in soil that you don't need or want to till.

Pruning Shears - You need a good pair of these for keeping trees pruned and cutting down rogue plants from garden areas. They are really necessary if you've got fruit trees.

Blade Sharpener - These are a must if you want to keep your tools sharp. Your jobs will go quicker and you'll save a lot of sore hands if your tools are sharp. Why do more work by using dull tools?

Natural Insect Control - You can't beat diatomaceous earth (DE) for taking care of any insect with an exoskeleton. When they crawl through DE they cut their exoskeletons because it is made of crushed shells and natural material. It feels like powder to us, won't hurt your pets, and it gets rid of ants, roaches, fleas, ticks, aphids, and more.

Organic Fertilizer - I love this one. It's been good to me and doubled my tomato output. I also love the polybag because I can reuse them for storing other things or even make a small container out of them and plant something.





SOME PERSONAL NECESSITIES (CONT'D)

Hydroponics Liquid Fertilizer - You've got to use something specifically for water growing if that is the way that you choose to grow some things this year. This one is simple and straight forward. It helps keep your pH correct and prevents algae from building up in your containers.

Weed Removal - This is handy for getting rid of the weeds that have really long taproots. Stickers and dandelions have long roots. That said, dandelions are edible and you can make a lot of things from them, including tea and wine.

Tomato Cages - These are essential. Tomato plants can get very heavy with fruit and you need to keep them up off the ground. You'll also need to put netting over them sometimes, to keep wildlife from eating your fruits before you can get them. These cages are essential.

Wagon/Wheelbarrel - This is an item that no garden or farm should be without. You can move compost back and forth, wheel bags of feed from your vehicle to storage, move plants, clean the chicken coop out and move a bale of hay. You'll find a hundred ways to use it and wonder why you never had one before.

Hand Truck - This item is for heavy jobs. You can move a stack of potting soil bags, animal feed, fertilizer bags, and so much more. You'll save your back and save time as well. It's very ideal for those who have livestock and always moving feed bags or hay bales.



SOME FINAL WORDS

It's been a stunning experience to see how fragile the food chain supply has revealed itself during difficult times. In response, people now -- more than ever -- are opening their eyes to living a life independence from fragile systems with which our lives depend on.

Growing your own food is predicated on self-sufficiency and being able to provide for not only yourself, but your family. There's true beauty in being able to put fresh fruits and vegetables on the table, free from any potential harmful chemicals.

If this ebook resonated with you and you'd like to explore creating systems of self-sufficiency more, Tiny Living Life is there for you. We strive to provide the best and most valuable information in order to help you make these dreams come true.

Growing your own food is one of many things you can be doing to gain independence, but the journey doesn't have to stop here. If you'd like to learn more about living off the grid and tiny homes, [click here to discover more](#).

