

G R O W . E N J O Y . S H A R E .

A Beginners Guide to *Gardening*

Included:

- What you'll need to get started
- Working with seeds
- A list of 10 easy to grow veggie plants
- Growing Your Own Flower Arrangement
 - Getting into a routine that will take only 15 min a day



Everything you
need to grow your
own food
-and flowers, too!



Getting Started

If you are a beginner, you'll soon learn that Gardening is both an art and science....and a bit of luck. You start by reading books and the backs of seed packets. You ask other gardeners and talk to strangers at the garden center. But mostly you observe. You watch what others are doing. You watch the plants in your garden. You pay attention to weather and birds and insects and racoons. And best of all, no matter what you know, or how long you've gardened, there is always something new to learn.

Light

Gardens do better in sun. You can get by with partial shade but if you want tomatoes and beans, you need at least six hours of sun a day. More preferably.

Soil

Roots need soil and air. If you have soil that needs a pickaxe to dig a hole, you need to add "amendments" like compost or composted manure, to lighten the soil. It doesn't need to be fluffy like potting soil...but it needs to have enough air to receive water and to drain.

Water

With drought at record levels all over the country last year, it's easy to understand that plants need water. When you're starting seeds, the soil needs to be moist on the surface till the seeds germinate. Later, the soil needs to be moist an inch down when you put your finger in the soil. In the beginning when plants are young, you might need to water every day. You have to keep checking.



Space

Plants need space both above and beneath the ground. Not too much space because they do like growing in groups and communities. But read your seed packet and be sure to give your plants at least a few inches of space.



Time

Gardening is a four-dimensional event. It changes dramatically over time. You need enough time for the plants to grow to full term. Lettuce is ready to eat in a few weeks. Winter squash can take 100 days. As the weather changes, what the plant needs changes, so you have to keep adapting. You also have to keep track of time and can't let a week or two pass without checking on your garden.



Love

Gardens that children grow will often thrive even though the kids don't do everything right. That's the love factor. I look back at my first gardens and can't believe I managed to get anything to eat. But I loved the process. I loved playing in the dirt and watching seeds germinate. I loved the idea of the garden even when I forgot to go out to water. I loved the red tomatoes in the sun. And the plants forgave my shortcomings and grew in that atmosphere of love.



Now that you know what you need to get started, let's move on to Basic Seed Starting in our next section!

Basic Seed Starting

Starting your vegetables and herbs indoors from seed is easy and very rewarding. By starting indoors you give yourself a jump-start on the growing season and you will be ahead of the game when it is time to start planting outdoors!

The back of your BBB seed packet will have the basic information you need to know to ensure you have successful germination.

Here are a few tips to remember to kick-off your seed starting efforts.

Plastic pots are best for starting seeds as they retain moisture more easily compared to a terra cotta or other clay pots. If you don't have traditional seed-starting containers available from your local garden center you can use recycled yogurt cartons, salad containers, or any other plastic container you find in your recycle bin! You can also make your own wood seed starting trays or your own newspaper pots. No matter what type of container you use make sure it is clean and sterile.

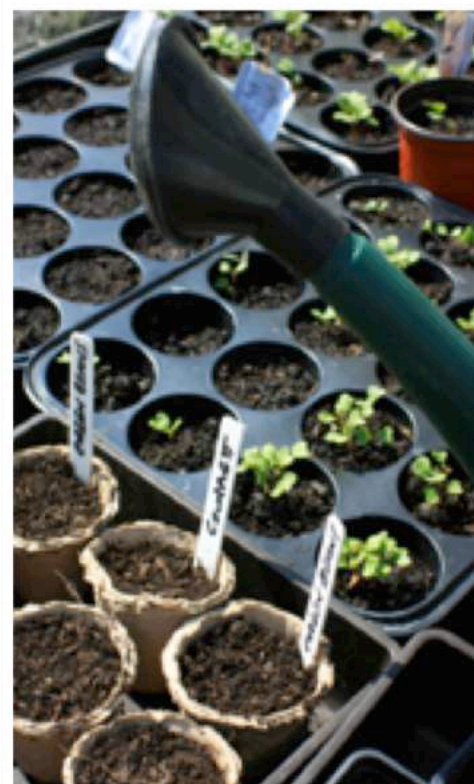


Proper drainage is essential.

Make sure there are holes in the bottom of your seed starting container to allow for good drainage. If you are using a recycled plastic item

you can drill or poke holes in the bottom by using a screw driver or nail. Excessive moisture trapped in a pot can lead to damping off and other fungal diseases. Ew!

Soilless seed starting mix. Really we mean it! If you want good germination start your seed in a soilless mix. The key is that when your seeds germinate and have at least their first set of true leaves you must transplant them to the next pot size up and into regular potting soil. Or, you need to start feeding them with a half-strength fertilizer. The soilless mix is essentially sterile with minimal nutrition, which is a perfect medium for your plants to germinate in. Less chance for contamination or other weird diseases to set in!



Moisten your mix. Pour your soilless mix in a bowl. Moisten it with water so that it isn't soaked, but it is nicely damp. Fill your seed starting pot or tray up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way full with your damp soilless mix. Gently press the seed into the soil approximately two (2) times the depth of the diameter of the seed. Then lightly cover your seed with more soilless mix. Gently press the soil to ensure good seed to soil contact.

Identify each pot. Even if it is only 2 pots we highly recommend that you mark each pot with the name of the vegetable and the date planted. You can use wooden craft sticks, left-over popsicle sticks, or any other object that sticks up and beyond the soil that you can write on.

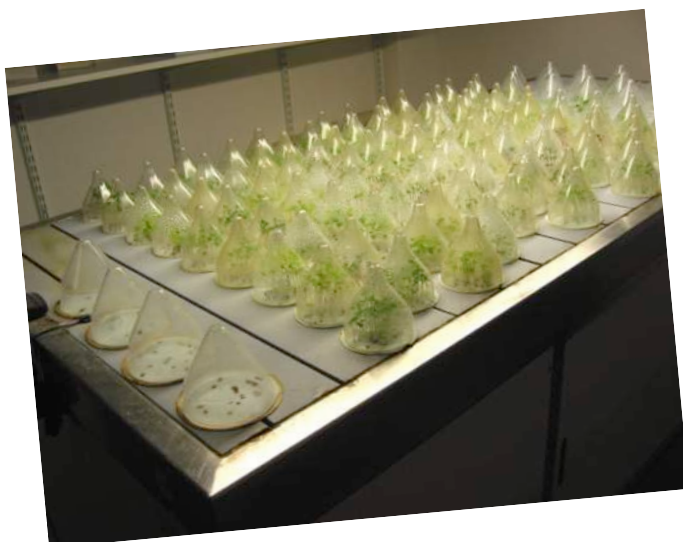
Water gently. We can't tell you how many times we have washed away seeds and newly born seedlings by watering too hard! We recommend watering from the bottom by placing your seed starting container in a dish or basin and filling it with water 2-3 inches and allowing the moisture to be drawn upward. If just the top has dried out use a spray bottle or a child's watering can with small holes. And if you don't have



either, while pouring out the water (gently!) put your hand in between the water and the soil to break the fall of the water before it lands on the seeds or tender seedlings. Water daily and remember, gentle!

Cover! Immediately cover your pot with a piece of saran wrap or a plastic bag to help retain the moisture. If you have a garden dome then place the lid on top. Keeping your seed evenly moist until germination is essential.

Temperature. Most seeds require temperatures of 65° to 75°F to germinate. The back of your BBB Seed packet will tell you the preferred germination temperature for your seed. Place your seed containers near an existing heater, on top of the stove (pilot lights can be very warm at night!) or use a space heater with the proper precautions to raise the ambient temperature as needed. Heating pad's designed specifically for plant use can also be placed directly under the seed containers which will encourage germination.



Good Light. Plants require at least 12 hours of daylight. If you are starting your seed where light is poor or during a time when there is less than 12 hours of light per day we recommend grow lights. If sowing your seed indoors, place your seed containers in a sunny, south-facing window and give the container a quarter turn each day to prevent the seedlings from overreaching toward the light and developing long and weak stems.

Acclimate Your Seedlings. Before you transplant your seedlings outdoors they need to be hardened off or acclimated to direct sunlight and fluctuating temperatures. It is best to do this over a three-to-five day period by placing them in direct sunlight during the morning only on the first day, then increasing their time outside by a few hours each day until they are strong enough to be transplanted. Don't feel rushed. If unexpected weather or wind arises, keep them indoors. Nothing is more disappointing than spending all of your time growing your precious seedlings to then have something go wrong when you put them outside.



Three Pea Toss

By The Splendid Table

Cook to Cook: A wok is the best way to cook these peas. Have everything cut and measured before turning on the heat.

Serve hot or at room temperature.

String the sugar snap peas with a small, blunt knife. Grasp the stem between your thumb and the blade, and pull down the length of the pea pod. Rinse the peas and thoroughly dry them.

Heat the wok or a straight-sided 12-inch sauté pan over high heat. Swirl in the oil. Add the onion, sugar, salt, and pepper, and toss over high heat for 1 minute.

Add the sugar snaps and toss 30 seconds. Stir in the snow peas and cook the mixture for 30 more seconds. Finally add the frozen peas and stir-fry another 30 seconds, or until they are thawed. Turn the peas into a serving bowl, and toss with the mint and almonds. Serve the dish

- 1 to 1-1/4 cups sugar snap peas
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium red onion, cut into 1/2-inch dice
- Generous pinch of sugar
- Salt and fresh-ground black pepper to taste
- 1 to 1-1/4 cups snow peas
- 1 cup frozen baby peas
- 2 tight-packed tablespoons fresh mint, chopped
- 1/2 cup salted whole almonds, coarse chopped

10 Easy to Grow Veggies for Your First Vegetable Garden

While there's no magic recipe to growing vegetables, there are varieties that can make a first-time home gardener successful from the very first season. There are so many to choose from that where to start isn't always clear. The first thing I tell people is to check perfection at the garden gate. There is no perfect plant, zone, nor gardener; it's simply a non-issue. Some plantings are going to work and some aren't. This is a fact, I don't care who you are or how lovely your garden is.

Fresh, organic, sustainable food harvested from your own backyard is one of the healthiest habits you can pick up. All it takes is couple of successful gardening experiences to make you a vegetable gardener for the rest of your life.

Stack the successful produce odds in your favor by:

1. Growing plants that are easy to plant, tend, and harvest. Like everything, some veggies are just more kicked back than others... start with those.
2. Ask around. Get the latest dirt (pun intended) on the tomato, pepper, or green bean varieties that thrive in your garden zone. This is no time to be shy, go down to your local nursery and call the Cooperative Extension Office in your county. They'll give you an earful -- write the names down on whatever is handy in front of you.

Here is Your Growing List:

Herbs

Whether they're grown in the veggie garden or are given their own bed, herbs are fantastic first plants. While they like their soil to drain well, it doesn't have to be particular soil. In fact, they don't even resent what we'd consider poor soil. Once they've become established, most herbs don't need much water, either.



Lettuce

Lettuce is not only easy to grow but it's fast-maturing. That's actually an understatement; they can go from seed to salad bowl in 4-5 weeks. These salad greens are typically cool weather lovers. But there are warm weather varieties out there, making lettuce virtually a year-round vegetable.



Tomatoes

America's sweetheart of the garden just happens to be pretty easy-to-grow, as well. Tomatoes are a terrific plant for a first time gardener. Tomatoes can take full-on heat and you don't need many to get a lot of fruit. Plus they do well in containers,



Radishes

These little salad jewels are easy-peasy to grow and they're fast-growing just like lettuce, so planting them week after week for a bumper-crop is fail proof. Radishes make no demands and come in a wide variety of shapes and colors.

Cucumbers

Growing cukes is like falling off a log -- they're ridiculously easy to grow. They can't get enough heat and you'll be giving them away by the bushel. Plant them next to a trellis or compost pile; they climb over everything.

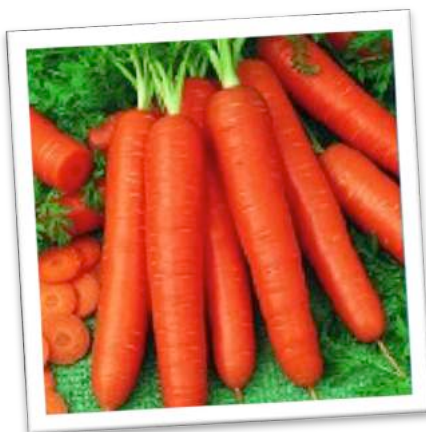


Kale

Mixed baby kales are the currently darlings of the produce section...and in my refrigerator too. The key is succession planting. About every three weeks, you should seed a patch of kale seeds fairly close together in intensive planting style.

Carrots

The only trick to carrots is that you need to have faith (patience) that the seeds will actually germinate. So, you have to keep the soil damp at all times until they show up. But that's the entire mystery, otherwise, they're not picky unless you want to grow some of the really long types. For those you need some loamy (fluffy) soil. If you have less then those conditions, just plant the stumpy or ball-types. Those have fantastic flavor.



Green Beans

Whether you grow a vining variety or bush variety, green beans are just easy and fun. Be aware that the bush types come into harvest all at once, while the vining continue to produce as long as you keep picking the mature pods off.



Peppers

Hot, medium, or mild; bell or chili, peppers are beautiful, flavorful, and a great crop to plant in a first garden.



Squash

Whether it's a summer squash such as zucchini or a winter squash like pumpkins, there'll be squash enough for everybody. By the way, "winter" squashes are so called because they have a hard outer shell that allows them to be stored for the winter as opposed to growing through the winter.

Grow Your Own Flower Arrangement

As you're planning your garden , be sure to have a supply of flowers that make great arrangements.

Here are some suggestions of what to grow.

Fillers

So the first step to growing your own flower arrangements is to grow your own fillers. You need sturdy greens like *ferns* or *peony leaves* or *azalea leaves*. Herbs like *sage* or *tarragon* also are good green filler. Other favorite fillers will be wildflowers with lots little flowers. *Annual baby's breath* always looks great, as do *wild asters*, *sea lavenders* or clumps of *blue flax*. Multi-stemmed flowers are also good supporting flowers. *Bachelor buttons* and *daisies* work well as do *columbines* and a stem or two of *penstemon*. Think nice airy wispy kinds of flowers.



The Divas

Now that you have a vase full of greens and supporting flowers, you can choose a few showstoppers pull it all together. Showy perennials like *roses*, *peonies*, *lilies* or annuals like *dahlias* or *sunflowers* are the high impact flower.

Wildflowers can be planted either in the Spring, when most people are planting their garden or in the Fall, when Mother Nature does her planting.

For Spring planting, sow one month prior to date of last hard freeze and gently water the area for the first month or so (unless Spring rains do it for you) to enhance germination.

For late Fall planting, simply scatter the seed on top of the soil or rake seed into the soil when freezing night time temperatures are constant, mulch the area lightly, water once and forget. The seeds will remain dormant through the winter and germinate the following spring when the soil warms and the days are longer.

In temperate zones, sowing at other times of the year can be successful. Plan to sow seeds for germination during the cool, moist time of year to allow the plants to become well established before the hot, dry season.

CONTROL OF YOUR WILDFLOWERS

Once established, taking care of your wildflower garden is a must. This means you should evaluate the site once a year (usually late summer) and determine if your expectations are being met. You should understand the first year would produce a dazzling display probably not repeated in years to follow. This is true because the flush of annuals in the mix tend to initially dominate the perennials. Most perennials do not flower the first year, instead expanding their deep root system to ensure longevity.

Your 15-min per day Routine

To Start:

Pick a small a small area (12 square feet is a good start). You can also do this in containers!

Your Routine:

- Set a timer for 15 minutes.
- Go to the garden.
- Water what needs to be watered.
- Weed what needs to be weeded.
- Harvest anything that needs to be harvested.
- When the timer goes off, stop. Jot down what needs to be done next into a Gardening Notebook.



About Us

BBB Seed is a small, family-owned company based in Boulder, Colorado that specializes in the distribution of wildflower seeds, heirloom and organic heirloom vegetable seeds and native grasses.

Content for this eBook has been provided by *Sandy Swegel* and *Chris McLaughlin*. Images are sourced on our website at <http://www.bbbseed.com>

