

Tips to Get Your Home Vegetable Garden Started



BlueCross BlueShield
of Mississippi

It's good to be Blue.

- ▶ **Start small.** Set aside an area of about 8 by 10 feet for your garden.
- ▶ **Choose your location.** Find a spot that receives plenty of sunlight throughout the day.
- ▶ **Prepare your soil.** A tiller can be helpful in preparing your soil. These can often be rented from your local hardware store.
- ▶ **Check your soil.** You can take a soil sample to your local nursery. They should be able to tell you if your soil will grow plants well or if you'll need additional materials, like topsoil or compost.
- ▶ **Choose your produce.** Some veggies that are easier to grow from seeds include peas and zucchini. For tomato or pepper plants, you may need to start your plants indoors about eight weeks before you're ready to transfer the young plants outside. You can also buy small plants and transfer them once they are ready. Don't plant something you won't use though. Choose veggies you will eat or use in another capacity, like preserving or canning.
- ▶ **Plant your crops.** Read and follow the individual instructions on the back of your seed packets. A general rule of thumb is to plant no deeper than three times the length of the seed. If you're using young plants, follow the instructions for planting those.
- ▶ **Water.** While some gardeners water every day, others say you only need to water once per week. Take the weather into account, as well as the soil and the time of year. If your plants begin to show even the slightest amount of wilt or if the soil is very dry, give them water.
- ▶ **Pest control.** Insects can destroy your plants. Spacing your plants appropriately and weeding can help prevent pests, along with adding fertilizer. If you begin having problems, organic and traditional insecticides can be used.
- ▶ **Harvest your crops.** Vegetables mature differently based on climate and location. The instructions with your seed packets can give you a general idea when plants will be ready. You may want to rely on how they look and taste. Once you eat a few, you'll be able to decide when to pick.

Source: Better Homes and Gardens