

Green Your Life

GROWING FOOD AT HOME

Currently there is a lot of discussion over what is the best type of food to eat, organic or conventional, local or imported foods. One way to know exactly where your food is coming from is to grow it yourself! Many of us live in small spaces without space for food gardens, so here are some ideas to help you grow some of your own food. Start small and watch your gardening skills bloom!

- **Sprouting** – Growing seeds into nutrient dense sprouts is a quick way to grow food at home. You can get started with a space as small as a jar and expand from there.
- **Indoor Gardening** – Indoor containers and pots are a great way to grow herbs and micro greens. Place them near a sunny window. If you are planning an outdoor garden, start your seeds indoors so they are ready for the spring.
- **Container Gardening** – If you have a yard, balcony, porch or window, containers of various sizes can be used for planting. Herbs can come indoors for the winter for year round use.
- **Hanging Planters** – If you don't have space at ground level, consider hanging planters from eaves troughs or indoor hooks. Herbs grow well in planters and upside-down devices can be used to grow tomatoes, greens and strawberries.
- **Backyard Gardening** – If you are new to gardening, start with a small 6x6 foot plot and experiment with different plant varieties.
- **Community Plots and Farm Shares** – Get involved and learn the ropes by volunteering at a community garden or farm. Check out Community Food Centres of Canada to learn about volunteer opportunities in your area (thepod.cfccanada.ca)



To assist you, there are books, blogs and classes dedicated to all varieties of gardening. Groups such as www.youngurbanfarmers.com provide online resources, coaching and materials to start your own garden.

THINK OUTSIDE THE FLOWER POT!

Starting a garden is a great opportunity to reuse creative containers to start plants and to give your garden character.

Planting Seedlings

Seedlings can be planted in a variety of repurposed materials. If using paper products, transplant seedlings directly into the pot. Poke holes in the paper to encourage root growth.



Paper Pinache
Coffee filters
Toilet paper rolls
Newsprint
Egg cartons



Planter Pizazz
Egg cups
Old tea cups & mugs
Running shoes
Muffin tins
Metal containers
Sea shells



Off-the-Wall Space Savers
Wooden Pallet Shoe Organizer

Looking for ideas and instructions? Visit [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com) for a lot of blogs and great ideas!

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OPT FOR ORGANIC

While growing plants of any kind is a good thing, growing organic plants is your best option. When purchasing seeds, make sure that they are certified organic

Why Organic Seeds?

- Conventional seed crops are often heavily sprayed with chemicals and are not subject to the same pesticide restrictions as food crops.
- Organically grown seeds are more adaptable to organic growing conditions, and more likely to thrive.
- Increased demand for organic seeds will help to fund organic seed research, drive supply and improve availability of new crop varieties.
- Starting from organic seeds will ensure organic plants.

Find organic seeds at www.FindOrganicSeed.ca

The Importance of Biodiversity

North America now relies on wheat, maize, rice and potatoes for 60% of calories. As a result, we are seeing reduced biodiversity and loss of many seeds from existence. This lack of diversity makes crops more susceptible to severe weather conditions (storms, droughts, floods), pests, disease and depletes the soil of minerals. Organic farming, seed preservation groups and increased awareness are helping us to reduce the loss of plant varieties. For more information, visit **Seeds of Diversity** (www.seeds.ca) or **Navdanya** (www.navdanya.org)

From Seed or Seedling?

Unless you have a green thumb, some plants are challenging to grow at home. Some climates also have a short growing season, so buying plants or starting plants indoors may be necessary. Seeds can be started indoors by soaking and sprouting, then planting. It is important to consider whether a variety of plant can be successfully transplanted and whether the growing season is long enough to grow from seed.

Plants that should be started in the ground

Beans, beets, carrots, corn, cucumbers, garlic, lettuce, micro greens, muskmelons, okra, parsnips, peas, pumpkins, radishes, rutabaga, salsify, squash, turnips, watermelon.

Plants that transplant well (start seeds indoors or buy seedlings):

Basil, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, cauliflower, celery, chard, chives, collards, eggplant, endive, escarole, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, mustard, okra, onions, parsley, peppers, tomatoes.

Sources: www.gardening.about.com

GROW IT, DON'T THROW IT!

The only thing more satisfying than eating food directly from the ground is eating food grown from scraps that were destined for the compost. Many vegetables and fruits can be replanted to yield more food or produce a pretty plant. These projects can teach your family more about how food grows. Here are just a few ideas!



Celery, Lettuce, Bok Choy, Green Onions & Cabbage

Slice away the stalks, leaving the bottom roots and base intact. Place in a cup with water about halfway up the roots. New stalks will form. These can be replanted outdoors.

Ginger

Choose a piece of ginger with a node (bump) on it. Plant under 4 cm of soil in a sunny spot and water regularly. Green shoots will appear and the root will grow under the soil. Cut away pieces to use and replant.

Garlic

Plant cloves in a pot with space between each clove. Place in direct sunlight and trim any blooms. Garlic will be ready to harvest in 8-10 months.

Potato and Sweet Potato Plant

Slice the eye portion off the potato, place in a cup and cover with water. This will grow a pretty plant, but likely won't yield any potatoes.

Pineapple Plant

Cut off the top of the pineapple, leaving about an inch of fruit. Let sit to dry for a day or two to prevent rotting. Plant in soil and water regularly. A plant will grow without yielding pineapples.

Source: Don't Throw It, Grow It! By Deborah Peterson, www.pinterest.com