

# Beginners guide to creating a vegetable and herb garden

It's best to begin your vegetable and herb garden in a sunny small area and increase its size gradually.

## Make a plan

 Draw a rough plan with measurements of your space. It's a good idea to consider existing plants, drainage and any existing or proposed structures. Vegetable gardens can be pretty; you don't have to hide them away in the back corner of your yard.

 Soils in urban environments may contain contaminants. A best practice recommendation is for produce to be grown in containers or in raised beds, built from non-chemically treated wood or other safe materials, and built directly on landscape fabric (available from hardware stores) to allow water to infiltrate and to provide a barrier between the underlying soil and the new clean fill.

## Consider what to grow and when

 Have a think about what vegetables/herbs you want to plant, as some may need more or less space.

 Have a look at a seasonal planting calendar to know when different varieties need to be planted.

 For easy, fast growing vegetables try radish, lettuce, spinach, bok choy, sugar snap peas, beans, cucumber and zucchini for some fast food, garden style!

## Maintenance

### Planting

1. Planting from seed is always a cheaper option. Choose non-hybrid varieties and follow the directions on the packet.
2. Top dress and work into your garden bed compost and or worm castings (ensure compost is properly composted).

4. Water the bed and allow at least a week for any weed seeds to germinate, turn them before planting your vegetables.
5. When planting be sure to follow direction on the seed packet. If planting plants from pots, dig a hole twice the size of the pot and incorporate some compost with the existing soil.
6. Mulching your garden will help to keep moisture in your soil and keep the weeds down.

### Watering

 Water your plant at well-spaced intervals around the plant's drip line, this is the area under the plant's canopy. Try not to water the foliage.

 Always water in the coolest part of the day. Use drip irrigation to save water.

### Fertilising

Compost and worm castings are the most sustainable option. If you don't already recycle your garden and kitchen refuse why not start composting or worm farming now, this free organic fertiliser could be the key to your success!

## Grow with your garden

Learn from your successes, failures and trial new ideas. Combat pest with natural remedies like garlic spray or companion plants. Nurture the biodiversity of your backyard by avoiding harmful herbicides and pesticides, research the safe alternatives and reap the rewards.

## For further information

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