

Plan a Menu Garden for Health and Wellness

Reap the benefits of gardening, even if it's on a small scale. A themed, edible garden is sometimes called a menu garden or recipe garden.

People don't have to invest in a huge vegetable garden to feed their families — they can just grow a few vegetables that they like to eat and will use in a recipe, such as tomatoes and peppers for salsa. Maybe people don't have a lot of land to grow gardens, or didn't grow up with gardening, so it's a nice way to add it into family activities. **People can fit some gardening into a busy schedule.**

The key ingredient to a recipe garden? Plant the most-used produce and herbs from your most-used recipes.

Planting a recipe garden also **can help get kids eating healthier.** Research shows if kids help grow food, they're more likely to taste it.

Going to a **local farmers market or farm stand, even being a member of community supported agriculture**, is a way to learn about what plants grow in your area that you might not be familiar with. If you're buying directly from farmers, you can ask them questions about growing conditions. If you buy (seedlings) from a local greenhouse, then you can ask them all sorts of questions.

"I look at the recipe gardens as helping people understand it can be much smaller scale. **It doesn't have to be a large vegetable garden to enjoy all the benefits.**" Patrice Powers-Barker, OSU Extension, Lucas County.

For Ohioans, the county extension office can be a great resource for gardening, whether you're a novice or a master. In **Lucas County, the Horticulture Hotline** is staffed by Master Gardener Volunteers, April - October, Monday and Wednesday, 10am - 1pm. Call 419-578-6783 or email lucascountymastergardener@gmail.com.

For more information, including questions on **home food preservation** like canning, freezing and drying, contact Patrice Powers-Barker, powers-barker.1@osu.edu, OSU Extension, Lucas County, Family and Consumer Sciences. lucas.osu.edu

Handout adapted from insights.osu.edu/food/recipe-gardens-work-you

Sample Menu or Recipe Gardens

8 RECIPE GARDENS



Just a few idea starters for those with a green thumb and healthy appetite.

PIZZA GARDEN



Mix herbs, such as oregano and basil, and veggies, including tomatoes and peppers.

FRENCH FRY GARDEN



Plant potatoes of different colors for rainbow fries. Don't forget tomatoes for fries' longtime sidekick: ketchup.

SALSA GARDEN



Plant a variety of tomatoes, peppers, onions and cilantro.

TEA GARDEN



Lemon balm and sage are good herbs. Spearmint, peppermint and chocolate mint are refreshing.

SPRING SALAD GARDEN



Good to grow in early, cool temperatures, try leafy greens, spinach, peas and radishes.

PESTO GARDEN



Sweet basil is commonly used in pesto. But you can also use other leafy greens and garlic.

SNACK GARDEN



Try sunflowers and popcorn, which doesn't need as much room to grow as sweet corn.

EDIBLE FLOWER GARDEN



Garnish your meals with nasturtiums, borage (aka: starflower) or herb flowers, such as purple chive blossoms.

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