

Vegetable gardening 101

Planting your own vegetable garden has many benefits – fresh, seasonal veggies right outside your door, outdoor physical activity, and a boost to your mental health. Here are some tips to get you started.

Plan

- Choose a spot with plenty of sunlight.
- Make sure you have easy access to water.
- Use loose, well-drained soil.
- Map your garden. Plant tall crops like corn north or west of short crops. Peas, green beans and cucumbers can be planted together. Tomatoes grow well in pots.
- Add a few companion flowers in your garden like marigolds or sunflowers.



Marigolds and sunflowers naturally discourage bugs from invading your garden.

Plant

- Start your seeds for tomatoes, peppers and broccoli early indoors.
- Wait until after the last spring frost to start planting outdoors.
- Check with your garden supply retailer for high-quality seeds and plants.
- Plant in straight rows to make cultivating, harvesting and insect control easier.
- Space seeds uniformly to give your veggies room to grow to their full size and best flavor.
- Plant at 1–2 week intervals for a continuous supply of vegetables.
- Follow the directions for applying a good quality fertilizer (plant food).
- Water plants regularly, especially in the early stages. Try to water early in the morning.



Remove the leaves on the bottom third of tomato plants to help prevent mold and rot.

Protect

- Monitor regularly for insects, weeds and diseases. Catching the problem early is key!
- Remove weeds and insect-ravaged plants.
- Cultivate (work the soil) and mulch to keep weeds at bay.
- Encourage beneficial insects like spiders that eat unwanted intruders in your garden.
- There are times when you may need to apply a pesticide to control your specific pest problem and keep your garden healthy.



All pesticides available in stores have been reviewed and approved by Health Canada and are safe for people, pets and the environment. Just follow the label directions.

You are now set for success – happy growing and healthy eating!