

May 2020

NEBLINE™

NEBRASKA EXTENSION IN LANCASTER COUNTY



Vegetable Gardening for Beginners



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Is this the year you want to plant a home vegetable garden? If so, there's still plenty of time to get started.

Home vegetable gardening is a popular hobby for a number of reasons. Some people garden for exercise and some for the enjoyment of harvesting flavorful produce that can be eaten fresh from the garden or preserved for use during winter. Others garden so they can grow a wider variety of vegetables than are available at their local grocery store. Finally, concerns about food safety are the motivation for others.

Regardless of motive, gardening can be as simple or as complex a project as you make it. However, careful planning can make gardening easier, more productive and more enjoyable. In planning your garden, it is important to consider a few basics.

How Big Should My Garden Be?

This is an important consideration because a small, weed-free garden will produce more than a larger, poorly maintained garden. Consider how many family members will help with the garden. Or will you be handling the hoe alone? Plants such as watermelon, pumpkin and winter squash take up large areas of garden space. In small gardens, the use of compact vegetable cultivars will conserve

Vegetables can be grown in gardens of many sizes; from large to small traditional in-ground plantings, to small container gardens.



space and enable gardeners to plant a greater variety of vegetables. So you might consider continuing to buy watermelons, squash and pumpkins.

Many vegetables can be grown in containers, creating a patio, deck, balcony or kitchen doorstep garden and providing growing room for those without enough space for a traditional vegetable garden. Vegetables and herbs can also be incorporated in ornamental plantings of shrubs, perennials and annuals to create an edible landscape.

What Should I Plant?

Tomatoes, both slicing and cherry types, are among the most popular home garden vegetables. Carrots, radishes, beans, peas and salad greens (lettuce, arugula, mesclun, sorrel) are some of the easiest vegetables to grow. Sweet corn is more difficult and has a relatively low-yield per plant, so is another vegetable to consider continuing to buy.

Vegetable cultivars with unusual color or shape, like 'Purple Haze' carrots or 'Easter Egg' radishes, make gardening — and possibly even eating vegetables — fun for children.

Consider buying those plants designated as an All-America Selection (AAS). Selection as an AAS Award winner recognizes a vegetable for significant achievements, proving it to be superior to all others on the market. Many winners become staples in the garden industry for many years, such as 'Imperator' carrot (1933), 'Straight-8' cucumber (1935) and 'Sweet Banana' pepper (1941).

For a list of some vegetable cultivars suitable for use throughout Nebraska, refer to Nebraska Extension NebGuide "Selected Vegetable Cultivars for Nebraska," (G1896) at <https://go.unl.edu/vegetables>.

see VEGETABLE GARDENING
on page 3

EXTENSION POSTPONEMENTS, CANCELLATIONS & CHANGES

Due to COVID-19, Nebraska Extension statewide is canceling or postponing all teaching or gathering events until May 31 unless they can be delivered remotely. At this time, Extension is planning for summer events as normal, but will publish the status of events scheduled after May 31 as far in advance as possible.

The Lancaster County Extension office is closed to in-person traffic until further notice. We want to do our best to assist you in any way we can, while also protecting the public and our staff. Extension staff are available via phone (leave a call) or email (lancaster@unl.edu). Many of Extension's educational resources are online (<https://lancaster.unl.edu>).

"Sewing for Hospitals" Community Service Project



Due to COVID-19, Bryan Health in Lincoln has reached out to Lancaster County 4-H and Extension needing sewn, 100% cotton, protective, adult-sized masks for non-medical personnel and patients.

Here are ways to help:

- Use your own 100% cotton fabric of any color or print. Fabric must be laundered with detergent, dried in the dryer and pressed before cutting. Each mask requires two 7" pieces of elastic. Extra elastic is available.
- Pick up kits containing fabric, elastic, "Sewer Info Sheet" and instructions to make at least 10 masks.
- Donate new, unused 100% cotton fabric (no fleece or flannel). We request at least 1/2 yard pieces.

Instructions, "Sewer Info Sheets" and more information:
lancaster.unl.edu/sewingforhospitals

If you have questions or are unable to access the instructions online, email Kristin Geisert at kristin.geisert@unl.edu.

EXTENSION RESOURCES

disaster.unl.edu/coronavirus-covid-19-resources

Find resources related to COVID-19:

- Children & Families • Food Access & Food Safety
- Mental Wellness • Ag Producers • Businesses

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