

LESSON PLAN

Growing salad greens in container (45 – 90 min. hands-on class)

Objectives

Participants will. . .

- Increase their knowledge of gardening, especially growing edibles.
- Practice propagating and caring for plants.
- Experience gardening as a fun and relaxing activity that can reduce the risk of health problems

Health messages

- Gardening can reduce stress, provide exercise, improve mobility, improve diet (reduce salt, add nutrients), improve mood, build social connections & community

Gardening messages

- San Diego's seasons: Cool season (winter & spring, Nov – Apr) and warm season (summer & fall, May – Oct)
- Annuals, perennials, biennials; growth cycles and seasons
- Propagating from seedlings and cuttings
- Watering, harvesting, using culinary herbs

Classroom setup (allow 45 minutes)

- Arrange tables, put potting soil in tubs (2 people/tub), fill squirt bottles with water. Near each tub, set out coffee filters, gloves, labels, markers, pots, pot saucers
- Plants in accessible location
- Sign-in sheet near entryway
- Evaluation sheets, pens, handouts handy so they can be distributed at end of workshop (give people handout when they give you evaluation)

Materials

Broom, brush, dustpan, wipes for cleanup
Coffee filters (for bottom of pot)
Evaluation sheets (+ extras)
Gloves (nitrile, disposable)
Handouts (assembled, + extras)
Lesson plan / script (several copies)
MG badge, apron
Paper towels
Pens / pencils
Plant labels & markers
Plants (3 plants/person + extras for demo and errors)

Pots & saucers (+ extras)
Potting soil (two 1.5 cu ft bags per 15 people)
Sample of potted-up salad greens
Sign-in sheet & clipboard
Squirt bottles for watering plants (one per tub)
Tablecloths (optional)
Trash bags
Tubs (one for every two people attending)
Water (1-gal)

Handouts

Master Gardener bookmarks

UCANR pest notes: "Gardening with Good Bugs" and "Beneficial Predators"

Eatfresh.org recipe cards

Welcome & intro – 5 min.

Key points

- Introduce yourself
- Master Gardeners are volunteers from University of California Cooperative Extension
- UCCE extends the research of the university to farmers and home gardeners by educating them about healthy, evidence-based practices.
- MGs educate the public in schools, community gardens, public events, and elsewhere.
- This class is 45 min. (or 90 min) long, from start to finish
- OK to ask questions; save general gardening questions until after class ends.

Health benefits of salad greens – 5 min

Questions to engage the group in discussion . . .

- Do you use salad greens in your cooking?
- What types of salads do you make?
- Do you grow your own? ?

Key points

- Growing your own salad greens can be a part of maintaining your own and your family's health and well-being
- Salad greens add nutrients to diet.
- Easy and enjoyable to grow – low-maintenance and can grow indoors year-round
- Gardening is easy way to get exercise, reduce stress, improve mood, and promote health and well-being.

Identifying plants (gather everyone around the plants) – 10 min.

Key points & steps

- Invite people to explore the plants – touch, taste, smell
- Identify the plants
- Shallow roots, easily grown in pots
- Annuals (live for a single growing season and die after flowering once -- e.g., basil, cilantro, lettuce, chard, spinach)
- Biennials (live for two years but often treated as annuals -- e.g., parsley, dill)
- Perennials (live from year to year and may flower many times -- e.g., mint, oregano, rosemary, thyme, some kales)
- OK to mix annuals and perennials in a pot or garden bed
- Cool season (winter and spring months in So Cal – e.g., parsley, cilantro)
- Warm season (summer and fall months in So Cal – e.g., basil, mint)

Planting demonstration (suggest people just watch) – 5 min

First starts, seeds later, and if time cuttings from Rosemary and mint

Steps . . .

- Show sample of lettuce potted up
- Place coffee filter in bottom of pot
- Fill pot with soil to about 3 inches below rim
- Remove plants from pots/pony packs, explaining process
- Gently tease out roots, explaining why
- Place plants on soil and add more to bring soil level to 1 inch below pot's rim
- Gently tuck plants in to remove air pockets
- Water lightly with squirt bottle
- Place pot on saucer
- Label plants

Planting activity - 15 min.

Tell people to . . .

- Find a work station (2 people per tub)
- Choose 2 - 3 plants
- Take plants to their station and pot them up
- MGs will answer questions and assist as needed

Key points (offer while people are finishing up)

- Plants need about 6 hours of sunlight a day, preferably morning sun (window, porch, backyard)
- Plants in containers dry out more quickly than plants in the ground
- Keep soil moist for about a week after planting
- After first week, check soil regularly, and add water when top 1 inch of soil has dried out

Questions?

Wrap-up - 5 min.

- Thank everyone
- Pass out (and collect) evaluations
- Pass out handouts

Cleanup