

NUTRITION NEWS

For Parents and Teachers of Elementary School Children

GET READY TO GROW!

With spring around the corner, many of us are dreaming of our favorite warm weather past-times. Here at CalFresh Healthy Living, we get excited about springtime gardening! When the sun shines, the plants grow! You can start your very own garden this spring with a few simple, inexpensive steps.

Read on to learn about easy, affordable ways to start a container garden.

Why Start a Garden?

- **Gardening is fun for the whole family!**
- **Gardening is economical.**
 - Seeds and starts are inexpensive. Containers can be made from recycled household items, like milk jugs, takeout containers, and even plastic grocery bags.
- **Gardening is good for your health.**
 - Vegetables grown in gardens may also have more flavor and nutrition than store-bought vegetables. Many store-bought vegetables are picked before they are ripe so they don't go bad.
 - Digging, planting, and harvesting are great active outdoor activities.
- **Gardening is educational.**
 - Gardening is a strong educational tool for children. They learn where their food comes from and how it is grown. They learn from every step: selecting the seeds, planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting.



Why Containers?

Container gardens take up little space, and can be set up anywhere there's enough sun!

- Decks, patios, and yards work great.
- Certain plants, like lettuce and herbs, can be grown in containers on sunny windowsills.

You can use any container, big or small.

- Containers can be made from anything that holds soil and has a drainage hole! The most important thing is that the container is the right size for the plant.

Container gardens use less water than gardens planted in beds.

- This saves money and is more efficient.

Container gardens require less digging, weeding, and work than garden beds.



Ingredients for Success



- **Planning:** Decide how much space you have, what you want to grow, and which containers to use. Be sure the plants you choose are suitable to grow in containers.



- **Sun:** Most plants need at least 6 hours of sunlight every day.

- **Soil:** Good plants need good soil. When container gardening, choose a good bagged potting soil. Avoid bagged soils labeled "planting mix", "soil conditioner", "compost" or "manure". These will not be well balanced for your container plants.



- **Water:** All plants need water. Containers can dry out quickly, especially in the summer months. To see if your plant needs water, put a finger in the soil. If the top inch of soil feels dry, the plant needs water. Check your plants every day. Make sure your containers have drainage holes in the bottom, so plants do not get too much water.



- **Seeds and Starts:** Certain seeds can be planted directly in the container. Other seeds must be started separately and then moved to its container. Buying starts is less work than starting your own seeds, but it is more expensive.

- **Containers:** Any container with drainage holes can work! Yogurt containers, colanders, and buckets are thrifty options.



What to Grow

There's so much to choose from! Here's a few plants that do well in container gardens:



Tomatoes
Peppers
Cucumbers



Green beans
Peas
Eggplant



Cilantro
Mint
Parsley



Leaf lettuce
Spinach
Swiss chard



Carrots
Beets
Radishes

More Resources

There's a lot to learn about gardening! Check out the resources below for more information. The "[Bountiful Harvest Container Garden Guide](#)" is our complete guide to container gardening for families. The "[Placer County Planting Guide](#)" shows you the best times to plant and harvest in our area. The "[UC Master Gardener Container Garden Hints](#)" is full of helpful tips for your new garden.



[Bountiful Harvest
Container Garden Guide](#)



[Placer County
Planting Guide](#)



[UC Master Gardener
Container Garden Hints](#)

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