

Healthy Habits

Benefits of Gardening

Gardening holds many benefits. A variety of fruits and vegetables are low in calorie and fat while providing necessary vitamins and minerals important in preventing disease. The activity of gardening can burn calories and help release stress promoting a more fit and relaxed lifestyle that is better for overall health and disease prevention. Growing your own food can help you eat healthier and gardening with family or in your neighborhood can promote community. All of these benefits can make you happier, stronger and prevent disease and promote living longer. Gardening may save money on the grocery bill and especially when you connect with other gardeners to exchange produce.

Getting Started Gardening

There are so many resources from the library, classes at local nurseries and of course the internet is full of articles and blogs with all you need to know about gardening. The following tips should help you get started in the right direction.

- Plan your space. Plan for sun exposure, water source and how much you plan to grow.
- In ground, indoor hydroponic or container garden? What works for your space and climate!?
- Choose what you plan to grow based on planting time of year, zones and soil. You may have to make adjustments based on these conditions.
- Use the proper tools. By researching the proper garden tool, the best soil for your conditions, pest and disease control and plant maintenance will help protect your investment of time, money and plants and allow for much enjoyment.



Kid Gardening

Children generally enjoy and have a natural curiosity about the outdoors. Gardening with children makes for a great family project, encourages healthier eating while exposing children to more varieties of fruits and vegetables. Additionally, gardening can contribute to a more active outdoor lifestyle. The following are some ways to successful kid gardening.



1. When beginning, set expectations for everyone. Go over rules, tour the garden area, explain tool use and what the end goal will be. Kids are more comfortable when they know what to expect.
2. Involve kids in the planning. Let children participate in planning, choosing what plants will be in the garden, trips to the nursery for plants or seeds and garden maintenance.
3. Choose fun plants. Tasty fruit and favorite vegetables along with colorful flowers like sunflowers or fun to touch lambs ear plants.
4. Plan yummy recipes to make with your harvest such as stir fry's, salads or zucchini bread. Options are only limited by what you don't plant.



5. Decorate your garden with fun crafts that include rock painting ladybugs or bees or making colorful signs to label what has been planted.
6. Have fun! Harvesting a yummy watermelon or getting to carve that fall pumpkin is a great gardening goal that can be a lot of fun.



Colorful Vegetables

Vegetables come in many colors. Some come in more than one color.

Directions: Use the Word Box. Write the color of each vegetable on the line.

Word Box

blue green orange purple red white yellow

asparagus



beets



broccoli



cabbage



carrot



cauliflower



celery



eggplant



green beans



pepper



kale



lettuce



peas



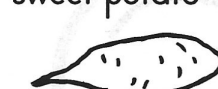
potatoes



spinach



sweet potato



tomato



corn



1. Which color were the fewest vegetables? _____

2. Which color were the most vegetables? _____