

Grow Your Own Salad Garden

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Fresh, green salads are great when they come fresh from the garden. All great vegetables found in salads are very easy to grow. This garden works especially well when grown in the spring (March) or fall (September) because the leafy greens and root vegetables like cool weather.

Getting Started

1. Select a container that will hold all the plants that you want to grow. Make sure your container is deep enough to let all of the roots grow. A recycled 5-gallon bucket or foam cooler work well. Make sure that the container is clean before you begin.
2. Make sure your container has holes in the bottom. If it is a recycled container, you will need an adult to help drill or cut drainage holes in the bottom of the container.
3. Make sure to moisten the potting soil with a little water to make the soil easier to work with once it is in the pot.
4. Fill the container with soil until it reaches about 1 inch below the top of the container.

Planting the Garden

1. Carefully sow the seeds of the plants you selected on top of the soil. Seeds should be buried about 1/2 inch below the soil, but no more. You also can use transplants of lettuce or spinach in your garden, but you should use seeds for the root crops. You can use seeds or bulb “sets” for your onions.
2. If using plants, make a hole in the potting soil big enough for the root and soil to fit in and be covered by the potting soil.
3. Water the plants well to make sure they feel welcome in their new home.

Caring for the Garden

1. Keep the garden in a location that receives between six and eight hours of full sunlight each day.
2. Make sure that the garden is watered. The soil should dry out slightly at the top before you water again. Perform a screwdriver test for moisture. Take a screwdriver that is about 6 inches long and push into the soil about 4 inches deep. If it comes out “dirty,” it means that the soil has enough

moisture to leave a trace on the screwdriver. If it comes out clean, the soil is dry and needs water. Check the soil every day. Depending on the weather conditions, you may have to water more than one time per week. Water loss occurs more quickly when the weather is hot and sunny, and the plants will require more frequent watering.

3. Keep an eye out for insects and other problems. If insects start eating your plants, you can remove the insects, if you see them actively feeding on the plant, and remove the plant parts as they turn brown or yellow.

What You Will Need

- A large pot, bucket or any other recycled container with holes drilled in the bottom
- Enough potting soil to fill the container
- Seeds or seedlings for a few of your favorite plants from the following:
 - Lettuce
 - Spinach
 - Radishes
 - Carrots
 - Beets
 - Onions
- A location for you garden
 - Spring and fall: bright and sunny
 - Summer: cool and shady



Photo credit: Shannon Holman, flickr.com

Harvesting Your Ingredients

1. Remove only the outer leaves of the lettuce and spinach. If you leave the plants in place, new leaves will grow back.
2. Pull root crops, like carrots and radishes, up from the soil. You can pull them up when they are young for baby carrots and radishes or let them get big.
3. Snip the tops of onions to use as green onions in salads. You can let the plant stay in the soil and let the bulb get big for sliced onions.

Try Something New

- In the summer, if your garden needs shade, plant a tomato in the middle of your garden. As it grows tall, it will shade the rest of the garden.
- Try interesting varieties of vegetables. Lettuce comes in all shapes and sizes. There are even black radishes and purple carrots.

Buttermilk Garlic Dressing

Toss together fresh veggies from your salad garden and serve with tasty homemade dressing.

1-2 medium garlic cloves

4 tablespoons minced green onions

3 tablespoons white wine vinegar

1/2 cup buttermilk

1/3 cup fat-free sour cream

Large pinch of sugar

1/2 cup olive oil

Mince garlic; mash to a paste with fork or back of knife. Whisk garlic, green onion, vinegar, buttermilk, sour cream and sugar in bowl. Gradually whisk in the olive oil. Season with salt and paper to taste.

Yield: 2 tablespoons per serving (Makes 24 servings)



Nutrition Information

Calories: 83, Carbohydrates: 2 grams, Fiber: 0 grams, Fat: 8 grams, Protein: 2 grams, Cholesterol: 0 milligrams, Sodium: 44 milligrams

For more information

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