



# You Can Grow a Garden Without a Green Thumb!

*By Kaitlyn Lawrence, Local Foods Educator (and Master Gardener Volunteer)*

Don't have a green thumb, but want to know some easy ways to grow a garden? It takes practice and TLC to develop a green thumb so do not be discouraged! If starting plants from seed is giving you trouble, buying starter plants might help. You can find starters (transplants) at your local farmers' market, roadside stand, or hardware store. Starters are not as fragile, have developed strong roots, and are adaptable.

Growing a garden is a lot of work, and if you do not have the time, space, or are new to gardening, container gardening might be the right fit for you! Start with a five-gallon bucket or pot. Containers are mobile and harvesting is easier because pots can be placed near your house or higher off the ground. Providing enough space for the plant to thrive, choosing the right potting soil, and making sure you have enough water and sunlight will allow the plant to grow healthy. Soil dries out faster in a pot. Having proper drainage at the bottom is important. Try growing herbs such as basil or chives. Basil can be harvested and cut multiple times to make tasty pesto or to season up a homemade pizza. Chives are great in salad or as a garnish and they grow back after each cut.

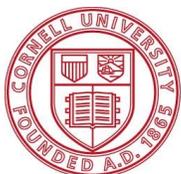
If you are feeling adventurous, zucchini and tomatoes can also be grown in a pot. Each vegetable requires a larger pot so roots are able to develop fully. A five-gallon bucket can hold one tomato plant with a ring of lettuce or herbs, or two pepper plants with herbs, or one zucchini plant.



If you are a hands-on learner, contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension and find out who the nearest Master Gardener Volunteers are in your area. They can also help you figure out what plants and varieties will thrive in your local growing zone.

If you do not feel that container gardening is right for you, but you also do not want a large garden, raised beds might be right for you. Raised beds are higher off the ground, reducing bending over. Growing your garden in raised beds

reduces soil erosion, provides good drainage, and reduces the amount of soil pests, such as slugs and snails. Gardening takes practice but once you are able to enjoy your own homegrown food, it is a great feeling!



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