



GARDEN ESSENTIALS

City Girl Gardener

Need a Plan?

- Check the Internet to determine what USDA zone you live in. Choosing the plants that will thrive in your garden will determine the amount of work it will require to grow healthy produce. <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/index.htm> For example, Zone 9 during the Spring/Summer consists of but is not limited to: tomatoes, okra, cucumbers, eggplant, yellow and zucchini squash, green beans, purple hull peas, bell pepper, hot peppers, onions with green tops, Water melons, red potatoes, corn, pears, blackberries.
- Grow vegetables that you like to eat and will provide the nourishment your body's needs.
- Buy seeds or plants that have been rated "organic." No chemically fertilized and pesticides plants or seed. Read, ask questions, and buy from local farmers markets and/or organic stores.
- Organic Material Review Institute (OMRI) – If the product has this seal on it, OMRI listed, then it has been approved as an organic product.

Location, Location, Location

- The garden needs 6 to 8 hours of sun daily. Note: Are there trees nearby that will create shade later? If so, don't plant in that spot.
- Backyard gardeners, ensure the garden is near the entrance of your home.
 - If the garden is in the pathway between your home and garage, the easier it will be to stop by and spend time in the garden.
 - A small garden will require at least 1 hour of attention per day when you first start the garden. But after you have planted, you will need to invest at least a ½ hour every 2 days.
 - Access to water is extremely important, position your garden where the water supply can be accessed conveniently or extend your sprinkler system into the garden. Invest in a watering system. Go to the Home Depot ad on my site, <http://www.citygirlgardener.com/index.html> and purchase a garden watering kit (about \$25). The instructions are great. Or e-mail us if you have problems installing it and we will help you through it.
- Consider moisture requirements, drainage, height and width of the plants you would like to grow.

Prepare the Garden Soil

- Have your soil tested by your local Agricultural Extension Office or purchase a soil test kit. <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/>
- The soil test results will provide a complete breakdown of the PH and nutrient properties of the soil. If the test indicates an imbalance, then amend the soil based on the test results.
- You can also invest in a PH soil tester from \$8 to \$25. A good investment.
 - Amend your garden soil organically; do not use synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. Use products that are labeled organic and come from reliable sources. The soil amendment should include a mix of compost and manure (manure from local livestock that has been organically fed), or, go to the kitchen, try Molasses, Epsom Salt, Corn Meal, (see "From the Kitchen" garden tips on the page titled "Gardening 101" left bottom side of the page)

PLANT

- Mound your rows, so that the water drains properly.
- Sprinkle a little root starter in your planting hole (I get mine from Milliesbarn at milliesbarn@netzero.net)
- Insert your plants according to the directions from your vendor. I recommend Botanical Gardens for seeds and Home Depot for plants. Go to their web site from my site and make your purchases.
- Water
- Then, be patient, they will normally grow as indicated on the instructions.

Tools

- In my career, the right tools saved time and money, produced a better product, and reduced injury. The same applies to gardening.

We recommend basic tools consisting of: a towel, hand fork, hand pruners, hand shove and a pair of gloves (shameful plug, buy them from me). A water hose is essential, as well as a pail or bag for debris. If you are a country girl living in the city like me, you will need a straw broom, straw hat and a good old fashioned hoe.

Shop from my site, so that I can continue to bring you good, free, information on healthy living.

<http://www.citygirlgardener.com/Gardening-101.html>



My first successful garden started with this area and 4 inches of organic compost from Milliesbarn.
milliesbarn@netzero.net



I tried herbs first, Rosemary, Sage, Basil, Cilantro, Lemon Balm, Peppers. I thought I would try to season my organic food that I was purchasing, from the organic store, with herbs and accessories that I grew. (I was still cute, a real City Girl; straight leg jeans, garden boots, jewelry)



Then I became we, my husband and daughter came on board. We decided; let's take this a little further. We planted the food that we were buying from the organic grocery store (\$100 every time we went to the store), tomatoes, cucumbers, spinach, lettuce, carrots, onions, parsley, you know, a salad. Now, we are growing vegetables and herbs that we like to eat, in our summer and winter backyard gardens.

Loving it!



All of these items and much more were grown in that space that I started with. The garden feeds a family of 4 and a few neighbors. We plant twice a year and harvest year throughout the year.

Love Ya!

City Girl Gardener

