



Planting With Mom



We celebrate Mother's Day on Sunday, May 8. Does your mom like to work in the garden? You can work on a gardening project together, and your whole family can enjoy the harvest!

Container gardening

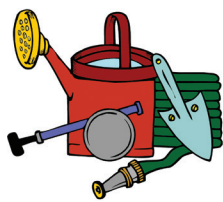
Even if you don't have space in a yard for a garden, you can use containers of any size to grow edible plants (plants we can eat).

Containers can be found at garden centers, or you can use clay pots, plastic garbage cans, bushel baskets or milk cartons. Choose containers that will hold your plants when they're fully grown.

Get ready to plant

After you find a container, you may need:

- gravel or small rocks
- potting soil
- seeds
- fertilizer
- stakes
- a trowel
- a watering can or garden hose



Next steps

1. Put 1/2 inch of gravel in the bottom of the container and fill to within 1 inch of the top with potting soil.

2. Decide which types of plants you'll grow according to the space and light you have. Plant the seeds and use fertilizer according to the directions on the seed packet.

3. Water plants whenever the soil begins to feel dry. It's best to water early in the morning.

Mini Fact:

You can also plant herbs, such as basil, and fruits, such as blueberries, in containers.

Get planting!

The Mini Page suggests a few edible plants to get you started.

Cucumbers

- Sunlight: full sunlight
- Spacing: large container; space 6 inches apart
- Harvest: when about 5 inches long
- How to use: Cucumbers are a cool, crunchy treat on a hot day. Use a potato peeler to scrape off long strips of the skin, and your cucumber slices will have striped edges!



Carrots

- Sunlight: some shade
- Spacing: at least a 12-inch-deep container; space 4 inches apart
- Harvest: when about 1/2 inch in diameter. (Carrots grow underground.)
- How to use: Carrots are great "take-along" vegetables for lunches or picnics. Dip them in ranch dressing. They're good steamed, too.



Tomatoes

- Sunlight: full sunlight
- Spacing: 18 to 24 inches apart; some tomato plants will need cages or stakes so that they can grow upward.
- Harvest: when firm
- How to use: Tomatoes are tasty by themselves, but you can also make spaghetti sauce, salsa for chips, and soup with them. They're great on sandwiches and salads, too.



Bell peppers

- Sunlight: full sunlight
- Spacing: 15 to 18 inches apart
- Harvest: at any stage; yellow and red are sweeter than green
- How to use: Bell peppers can change from green to yellow, orange or red. They are a sweet, crunchy addition to pasta dishes or salads, and they're great to eat by themselves. They're not spicy.



Onions

- Sunlight: full sunlight
- Spacing: 4 to 6 inches apart
- Harvest: when tops are about 8 inches tall. (Onions grow underground.)
- How to use: Onions add flavor to many of our favorite foods, including soups, salads, pasta sauces and chili.



Are you in the zone?

Some plants should be grown at different times in different parts of the country. For example, it's warmer in Daytona Beach, Florida, in May than it is in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Gardeners use a map of zones of the United States to help them know when to plant. You can find your zone at garden.org/zipzone. Just type in your ZIP code to find your zone.

Resources



On the Web:

- kidsgardening.org
- garden.org/plantguide

At the library:

- "Kids' Container Gardening" by Cindy Krezel
- "Super Simple Salad Gardens" by Alex Kuskowski

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of gardening are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



CARROT, CONTAINER,
CUCUMBER, DAY,
EDIBLE, FERTILIZER,
GARDEN, GRAVEL,
HARVEST, LIGHT,
MOTHER, ONION,
PEPPER, PLANT,
PROJECT, SOIL, SPACE,
TOMATO, WATER,
WORK, ZONE.

R T I E K R O W R C H C G S Y
T E H G L X S Y E R L A A C A
O O P A P B M O T H E R R U L
P N M P R L I Y A D V R D C I
R L I A E V A D W R A O E U G
O S V O T P E N E B R T N M H
J M O E N O Q S T U G U F B T
E I Z C I F E R T I L I Z E R
C Z O N E A P Z Y S O I L R U
T R E N I A T N O C E C A P S

Cook's Corner

Berry Fruit Crisp

You'll need:

- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 cup regular oats
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

- 1/4 cup walnuts
- 1 large egg
- 2 cups fresh blueberries
- 1 cup blackberries
- 3 nectarines, sliced
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- Vanilla low-fat frozen yogurt or ice cream



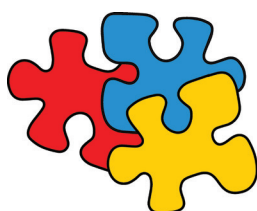
What to do:

1. Place first seven ingredients in a blender; pulse until blended and nuts are ground.
2. Pour mixture into a bowl and add the egg; stir until moistened.
3. Wash fruit and place in a large bowl. Stir in maple syrup to coat fruit.
4. Pour fruit mixture into a shallow baking dish. Crumble flour mixture evenly over fruit.
5. Bake in preheated 350-degree oven for 30 to 35 minutes until bubbly. Top with frozen yogurt or ice cream. Serves 6.

* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

Puzzling

Unscramble the words below that remind us of Mother's Day.



velo _____
rginps _____
epcasil _____
raec _____

Answers: love, spring, special, care.

Mini Jokes



Jerry: What's red and goes up and down?

Jack: A tomato in an elevator!

Janice: Where did the first corn come from?

Jessie: The stalk brought it!

Eco Note



The world's oldest wild bird known to breed has become a mother yet again at the age of 65. The albatross, known as Wisdom, was first tagged in 1956 and has been monitored as she has reared more than 30 chicks and flown more than 3 million miles during her lifetime. adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

For later:

Find pictures in the newspaper of edible plants you'd like to grow. Cut them out and use them to make a Mother's Day card for your mom.

Teachers:

For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bbs.amuniversal.com/teaching_guides.html

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