

# Creating a salad garden

What could be better than a fresh garden salad? A salad garden.

Make it as small as several hanging baskets on a patio or the spots of soil between the shrubbery around your house. Put a salad garden in a box or bed as large as your favorite restaurant salad bar, and it will perk up your salads all summer.

Plant lettuce, spinach, radishes, bunching onions, beets, carrots, kale, Chinese cabbage, deep red rhubarb, Swiss chard and turnips. Add a few cucumbers and tomato plants, or plant some sugar snap peas and let these climb into the air above the garden or hang down from a basket overhead.

Grow a few herbs like chives and parsley and some tasty, colorful, edible flowers like nasturtiums. Choose any combination of the foods your family likes best, and one or two new ones to stretch their repertoire.

Besides unlimited harvests, you will delight in better, fresher flavor, the fun of watching seeds sprout and grow, and the exercise of good garden therapy.

You don't have to be an experienced or dedicated gardener for salad success. But your efforts will be much more richly rewarded if you choose and prepare the site well.

### Soil preparation

Most important is soil preparation. Whatever soil you have — clay, loam, or sand — adding organic matter is the best way to make it better.

Make a 50/50 mix with half soil and compost and half Canadian sphagnum peat moss. This keeps the soil loose so

that air and water can penetrate. It improves the tilth and texture of the soil tremendously.

With well prepared soil you can plant much earlier than otherwise. In warm weather, a salad garden planted from seed will begin producing greens and radishes in a month or less.

With mixing your crops and replanting, a salad garden will bear from late spring until hard freeze the next winter. And then pots of chives, parsley and cherry tomatoes can continue to add flavor and flair from pots on the indoor windowsill.

### Small space gardens

The easiest way to have a salad bar in a limited space is to plant a wide swath of mixed seeds: lettuce, spinach, radishes, carrots, beets and chard all stirred together.

You can press the little bulbs of bunching onions into the soil about three to four inches apart, across the wide row either before or after you sprinkle on the tiny seeds.

Sprinkle the seeds so that they are about 1/2 inch apart over the entire seedbed and just barely covered. Tamp everything down with the back of the hoe to bring the seeds and sets into good contact with the soil.

Water well with a gentle sprinkle flow so as not to wash away the shallow seeds.

In such a multicrop row, some crops come up quickly, shelter the slowpokes, and crowd out the weeds, so everything grows nicely together. When you are ready to harvest, you have a whole mixed salad with one cutting.

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Electrical equipment such as lawnmowers, hedgetrimmers, edgers, and whippers should only be used when lawns and shrubs are dry. Water conducts electricity and can magnify the effect of any



accident or problem with your equipment. And no matter what the weather, it pays to check your tools periodically to ensure that they're in good condition. If you're using extension cords, use only heavy-duty 3-prong cords.

And of course, all of your equipment including extension cords, should be CSA approved. Sure we want you to keep your lawns and gardens neat. But if it's wet outside, take the day off.

### ENERGY HINTS

## Taking Care Of The Cold Ones

### Vacuum your Refrigerator!

Vacuum the condenser coils at the back every six months. Dust and dirt on the coils make the appliance work harder and use more electricity.

### Check the Temperature

The best temperature for the fresh food compartment of your refrigerator is 3°C (37°F-42°F). Both your freezer compartment of your refrigerator and your freezer should be kept at 18°C (0°F).

### Location, Location! Your Freezer

Keep your freezer in a dry, heated and insulated area. If it's kept in an area where temperatures fluctuate, it could damage the compressor.

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