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Developing countries can teach local gardeners a few lessons

Its gardening season. And any gardener in Canada can share at least one story of challenge and triumph when trying to grow their favourite vegetable. Christian Children's Fund of Canada, an international development organization, says there are a lot of lessons gardeners here can learn from those who plant in some of the world's difficult environments. In Africa, Asia and South America, families who plant essential food items are constantly challenged by the harshest of climates, a lack of water and use of the most basic harvesting tools. Yet, they have learned to be innovative and creative with their knowledge and resources.

Lessons Canadian gardeners can learn from those who plant in developing countries are to:

- Diversify by planting different varieties. In drought and pest prone climates people know not to put all their eggs in one basket. You may love tomatoes but if they don't come in as well as you would have hoped then you can enjoy a back up harvest of cucumbers or peppers.
- Select plants that complement each other: Fertile land to grow food is at a premium around the world. If you have limited space try growing the Three Sisters Garden of corn, beans and squash. Plant the corn first which grows tall, followed by pole bean seeds around the corn which uses the corn stalk to climb up and be supported. Finally, place the squash seeds about a foot and half from each mound of corn.
- Share your expertise with a neighbour.



Those who plant in the developing world share their know-how and understanding with their community for all to benefit. Talk with your neighbors to get gardening tips. Implementing their gardening secrets will help your garden flourish.

- Get to know your environment. Your soil may not be appropriate for all types of seeds. Take a cup of soil and study the particles you find in it. Is there clay, sand, gravel, and organic material? Find out what would grow best in the type of soil you have in your garden.
 - Remember to share the fruits of your labour. If you are blessed with an abundance of vegetables and fruits, don't create waste—share with friends, neighbours and local food banks who accept fresh goods.
- More lessons from farmers in the developing world and what tools and seeds are available to them can be found online at www.ccfcanada.ca.

— News Canada
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