

Make gardening fun for kids

Planting a garden is a great way to teach your children how to take care of their world. They will also learn to be patient, responsible, and open to eating new vegetables.



Here's how to get started:

1. Invest in kid-sized gardening tools. Some adult-sized tools like rakes can be dangerous for little ones to carry. By giving them their own mini-set of tools, they can copy what you are doing.
 2. Let your children decide what to plant. They will be more interested in their crops if they are consulted in the decision-making process. Be sure to add some quick-growing plants into the mix like sunflowers, radishes, snow peas, pumpkin, and lettuce to satisfy low attention spans.
 3. Give your children their own garden beds. They will take ownership of their own space and nurture their crops more carefully. Pick plots in areas with the best soil and light. The children can decorate their spaces with rocks, sticks, or other outdoor items they find.
 4. Educate while you wait. Teach your children about the importance of gardens for families all over the world. Through Christian Children's Fund of Canada, an international children's charity, you and your child can provide a vegetable seed kit to a family in a developing country while growing the same items here. As children check on their own plants, they will wonder how the other family's vegetables are doing too. Visit www.cfc.ca and search the gift catalogue for garden-growing items.
 5. Reward hard work with praise. Be sure to encourage your children on their well-maintained garden plots and crop successes. Ask if you can use their carrot crop to make a salad or carve their small pumpkin together so they can take pride in their efforts.
- Be enthusiastic and let your children get dirty and explore. They will have positive memories of their garden and will want to do it again next year.

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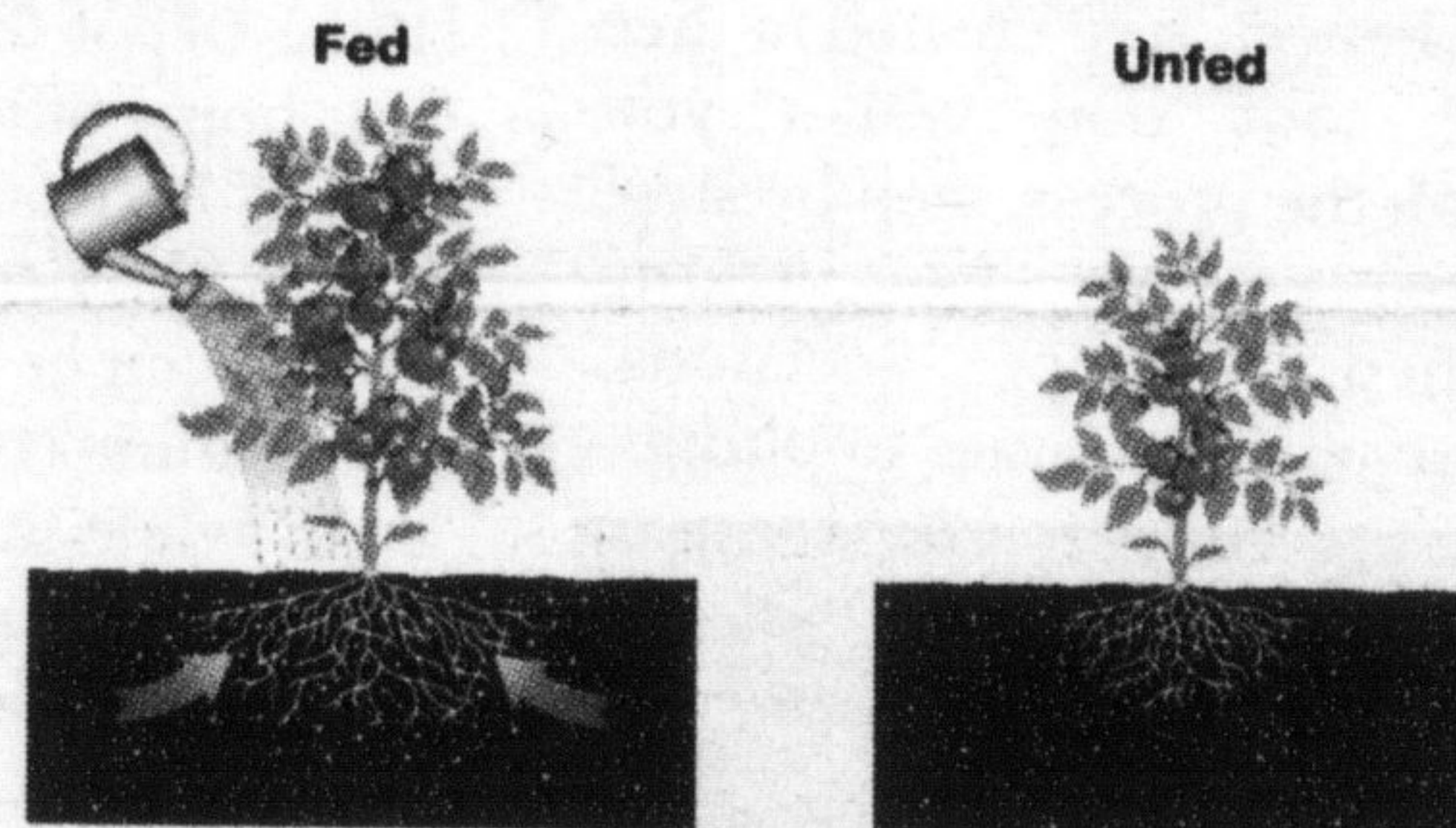
Tips for a garden of delicious vegetables

When it comes to eating – or to fuelling our body in the most nutritious way – there may be nothing more pleasurable or satisfying than growing our own food.

Indeed, growing vegetables represents quality time with the family for planting, nurturing, and harvesting the yield – and it's true that nothing beats the taste of fresh-picked vegetables straight from the garden.

If you'd like some refresher tips, or if this is the year to plant your first garden, take a look at this helpful little checklist from Miracle-Gro, a leading name in plant food:

- **Plan:** Choose a spot that gets at least six hours of full sunlight daily and with a water source nearby. Drainage is key so consider a raised bed. In limited spaces, terrace pots for vegetables are a pleasant alternative.
- **Prepare:** Clear your spot by removing grass, rocks, or other debris.



Add 5 to 8 centimetres of new soil, like Miracle-Gro Moisture Control Garden Soil, or Organic Choice Garden Soil. Both soils contain slow-release nutrients; improve drainage; support strong root growth; and promote beneficial micro-organism activity for an abundant harvest.

- **Plant:** Cold-weather vegetables like Broccoli, carrots, lettuce, peas, and spinach right after the final frost of spring. Warm-weather vegetables like corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers should be planted in late-May, after the

ground has warmed-up more.

- **Prevent Weeds:** Put a layer of mulch around the plants. An attractive, colour-rich brand is Scotts Nature Scapes Mulch.

• **Feed and Water:** At the seedling stage, your plants should be kept moist. When watering, aim at the base of the plant. Vegetables use up nutrients from the soil as they grow. Replenish these nutrients with regular feedings of a quality fertilizer, such as MiracleGro Water Soluble Plant Food, or Organic Choice Multi-Purpose Organic Plant Food.

- **Nurture and Care:** You may be surprised how quickly vegetables develop. Most grow from a tiny transplant to a full harvest in 30 to 90 days.

More information is available online at www.GroForGood.ca – and this spring, the Miracle-Gro Gardening Guide will be distributed in neighbourhood garden centres.

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