

Grow a Garden Together

Article written by Natalie Sehi (nsehi2@unl.edu), MS, RDN, Extension Educator

Have you ever considered growing a container garden? A container garden is a great option for those with limited space or those that are gardening for the first time. Late spring through early summer is an ideal time to start your own container garden.

Almost any vegetable or herb can be grown in a container. The more popular container crops are peppers, eggplants, tomatoes, beans, radish, and cucumbers. Herbs recommended for container gardening are parsley, rosemary, marjoram, basil, thyme, and chives.

Container Gardening with Children

Container gardening provides an opportunity for children to learn new skills without investing a large amount of time or money. When children are involved growing fruits, vegetables, and herbs, they are more likely to eat them. Helping them find success in gardening can be the start to a lifelong hobby that encourages physical activity, healthy eating and provides a wonderful way to enjoy time together as a family.

Try a themed container garden, as they can create more interest and learning. Choices include:

- **Pizza Garden:** tomato, basil, oregano, onion
- **Salsa:** tomato, cilantro, onion, hot peppers
- **Salad:** lettuce, arugula, radish, onion

New to gardening? Here are two great videos on container gardening from Backyard Farmer:

- Starting with Containers: <https://go.unl.edu/container>
- Planting in Containers: <https://go.unl.edu/plant-container>



Fresh Basil

Basil is an herb that grows well in a container garden. Store basil stems in water and cover with a plastic bag on the counter for up to ten days or in the refrigerator for up to five days. Always wash fresh basil under running water before using. The leaves can also be picked, washed, pat dried, and stored in an airtight bag in the refrigerator. Basil is a tasty ingredient in soups, salads, sandwiches, and a variety of pasta dishes. Have your children help pick basil to prepare delicious recipes like these: <https://go.unl.edu/basil>

For more information check out Family Fun on the Run:

<https://go.unl.edu/familyfun>

Sources:

1. *Container Vegetable Gardening, NE Extension:* <https://go.unl.edu/container-gardening>
2. *Field to Fork Basil, North Dakota State Extension:* <https://bit.ly/3eEe1OW>
3. *Growing Herbs in Containers, Illinois University Extension:* <https://bit.ly/2ZazYi8>
4. *Start Gardening:* <https://go.unl.edu/vegetable-gardening>