

Five Incredible Reasons Why You Should Start a Garden Today

www.ReadyGardens.com

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"The love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies." - Gertrude Jekyll

Modern day has done everything to separate us from nature. With the high demands of our lives, many of us feel depressed, uninspired and empty. Our fast-paced lifestyles keep us indoors more and prevent us from getting fresh air, exercise and truly enjoying the outdoors. As we continue to live our sedentary lifestyle, we do not have enough time to eat healthy foods, thus causing our health to suffer. Don't you think it's time for a change?

Imagine that rather than going to grocery stores to purchase your fresh produce, you walk out your door to pick vine ripened tomatoes, fresh picked basil, onion and garlic to go into the pot for dinner. How amazing would it be to have your very own "produce aisle" growing in your backyard?

That is exactly the change we all need in our lives – to reconnect with our food sources and ensure that we are providing the healthiest food sources for our family.

To get to the heart of natural living, many are starting to grow their own food sources. As lofty as some would say this goal is, it is attainable, you just have to know where to

start and have the dedication to follow it through. This e-guide will explore why a person should garden and will convince you to find your green thumb.

1. GARDENING HELPS YOU LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

Gardening is the gateway into sustainable living. Not only are you growing natural food sources, but these are the freshest foods you can possibly eat because they are freshly picked and still contain the maximum amount of flavor and nutrients.

Many studies have found people who eat more fruits and vegetables suffer less from cancer and chronic diseases such as heart disease, gastrointestinal disease and impaired vision. It's a lot easier to get more vegetables into your diet when they are growing affordably right in your backyard!

As well, there is a certain type of relaxation that occurs while gardening. It creates a pleasant atmosphere and is a great way to get some moderate exercise. While most will agree they enjoy the time piddling away in the garden, clinical studies have actually proven this can help alleviate stress. But there is more to it. As all gardeners know, soil doesn't just consist of dirt and minerals. It is teeming with so much bacteria that it could be considered an ecosystem all by itself. And apparently, some of that bacteria might have an effect on your sense of well-being. ([Source](#))

Did you know that there's a natural antidepressant in soil? It's true. Mycobacterium vaccae is the substance under study and has indeed been found to mirror the effect on neurons that drugs like Prozac provide. The bacterium is found in soil and may stimulate serotonin production, which makes you relaxed and happier. Studies were conducted on cancer patients and they reported a better quality of life and less stress.

Lack of serotonin has been linked to depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder and bipolar problems. The bacterium appears to be a natural antidepressant in soil and has no adverse health effects. These antidepressant microbes in soil may be as easy to use as just playing in the dirt.

The serotonin boost that is provided by this bacteria, might also aid in our learning abilities. One study that was conducted with mice, found that if the rodents ate the bacteria, they could traverse a maze twice as fast as their fellow test subjects. The scientists also found that the mice "exhibited a reduction in anxiety behaviors as well." ([Source](#))

With that said, I suspect most gardeners won't be deliberately eating their soil anytime soon. However, consuming the bacteria isn't the only way to feel the effects.

Gardeners inhale the bacteria, have topical contact with it and get it into their bloodstreams when there is a cut or other pathway for infection. The natural effects of the soil bacteria antidepressant can be felt for up to 3 weeks if the experiments with rats are any indication. So get out and play in the dirt and improve your mood and your life.

2. GROWING YOUR OWN FOOD SOURCES IS CHEAPER

We can all agree that the cost of food has been steadily increasing over the years. In fact, the cost of making healthy decisions about the food we put into our body is eating our budgets alive. We want the very best foods for our family, but buying solely organic products can be costly. But how do we know it's organic? And for that matter, with all the disinformation going on about organic vs. genetically modified, or whether or not the produce was subjected to a food-borne pathogen – who knows what to purchase anymore? If you are starting to ask yourself these questions at the grocery store, then it's time to find another produce source. There comes a time when you want to throw your hands up and shout, "That's it, I'm doing this myself."

That time to reconnect with your food source is now.

Did you know that mass produced varieties of vegetables and fruits were not grown to enjoy their flavor, but grown to survive the transportation process? Growing your own produce will give you more nutrients too. In the largest study (British Journal of Nutrition) of its kind, an international team of experts led by Newcastle University, UK, has shown that organic crops and crop-based foods are up to 69% higher in a number of key antioxidants than conventionally-grown crops. In one small step, you are saving money, becoming healthier, and living more sustainability. There is freedom in the simplicity of it. Freedom you can grow. By this very act, you are adding more money to your grocery budget to spend on other household needs. Think you're alone in your food freedom endeavors? You're not. In fact, it's estimated that during WWII, 20 million homeowners had victory gardens that produced close to forty percent of the fresh vegetables consumed in the United States.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ORGANIC, HEIRLOOM, GMO

There are so many different forms of produce to choose from: organic, heirloom and genetically-modified (GMOs) foods. What's the difference?

Genetically-modified – Seeds from a genetically modified variety are a hybrid of two separate varieties that have different genetic make-up from the original parent plant. These plants are usually clones, and as the plant matures, the seeds produced

from the plant will either be sterile, or start to revert back to the parent plants. Furthermore, the seeds that have been genetically modified have been designed to be disease-resistant, insect resistant, and drought resistant, in some cases. One can surmise that these type of seeds are not sustainable options because while the seed is created, a pesticide known as [bacillus thuringiensis](#) or BT is created inside the seed in order to keep insects away - even the beneficial ones.

Organic – Organic produce essentially describes the process for which the plant was grown in. The soil used to grow the organic varieties are without chemicals and pesticides, thus reducing exposure to long-term health issues. However, the plants used may be genetically-modified, and therefore, would more than likely not produce seeds that could be used in the future.

Heirloom varieties – These types of seeds were developed before 1940. Essentially, these were the seeds your grandparents used to grow their Victory Gardens during the Great Depression. Heirloom seeds are bred for how well they produce and for their flavor (not their durability while being shipped). Additionally, these types of seeds will produce fertile seeds that can be saved for subsequent growing seasons.

WHICH IS THE BEST CHOICE?

In my personal opinion, you want to make the most of your initial investment into your garden, so you want seeds that have proven vitality, bred for their flavor and will provide with continual harvests in the future. Heirloom seeds can provide that as they are open-pollinated

Many say that our food system is corrupt in that our commercialized organic food sources are not held to the same standards that those who produce their own food sources are. In fact, it is safe to say that even our store bought organic foods could be considered as corrupt as its GMO counterparts. The truth of the matter is, there isn't much difference between organic and conventional foods you buy at the store. Just because a product is labeled "organic", does not mean that it hasn't been exposed to herbicides or pesticides. [The inspection process](#) for products to be labeled organic is lax at best. As well, it is fraught with inconsistencies and potential conflicts of interest. At least once a year, a third party inspects farms and food manufacturers that claim their wares are organic. The rigor of these visits ranges from simply looking over paperwork to mucking about in the fields to conducting detailed interviews with farm owners and workers, along with processors and transporters.

NEED FOR HEIRLOOM

Above all, we need to put our health at the forefront of our priorities and homegrown food is the best place to start. We need to get back to our roots - *literally*. Many of our ancestors brought over seeds to begin a new life. These seeds were passed down from generation to generation. They are now called heirloom variety seeds. An heirloom seed, therefore, is seed from a plant that has been passed from one generation to another, carefully grown and saved because it is considered valuable. To have been saved and preserved for so long, these seed varieties have shown their value to many people and families for an extremely long time.

This brings us to the question asked at the beginning of this guide: Why garden? We all know that the taste of garden grown vegetable or fruit is unlike any other. It's been kissed by the sun, and nurtured under your watchful eye. Additionally, you are growing a non-GMO food source for a few cents per seed.

The seeds at Ready Gardens are all open-pollinated varieties that are sourced from the Amish country. They have been grown for centuries as a source of sustenance and passed down from generation to generation. These seeds are as natural as you can get, and are all pesticide-free and have not been chemically treated in any way. By growing your own food sources will provide your family with the freshest foods available.

3. GARDENING HELPS YOU REPURPOSE ITEMS YOU WOULD NORMALLY THROW AWAY

You don't have to spend a fortune at the nursery or garden supply center to have a happy and healthy garden. There are a few things you probably have lying around the house that can put some extra green in your thumb—and many of them are items you might otherwise consider trash!

You can create black, nutrient-rich soil with items like vegetable scraps, tea bags, coffee grounds, filters, newspapers, wood ash, grass clippings, old homework papers and dryer lint are also excellent items to collect for the compost heap. Imagine how much money you would save and all the vegetables you could grow simply by saving these items for your garden!

4. GARDENING HELPS A COMMUNITY

In a time not so long ago, people knew their neighbors. Children used to play outside and parents would be out there with them. Neighbors would talk to chat with each other the fence and maybe share some time honored garden tips or other advice. It's different now, but that can all change. What if you have a large squash harvest, or extra

tomatoes that you needed to off load. What a wonderful gift to share with a neighbor. This could start up a new neighborhood trend, as well as spark a few conversations. You'll be surprised how delighted people are when they see you come their way!

5. RECONNECT WITH YOUR FOOD SOURCE

A majority of the population solely relies on going to the grocery store to pick up fresh produce. But is that produce really fresh? A majority of our food sources travel thousands and thousands of miles just to make it into your store. When the price of gasoline increases, the price of our fresh food increases with it. What happens when those fresh food sources are too overpriced to purchase, or there are concerns of food-borne diseases? When you start your own garden, all of those issues are eliminated. As well, you know exactly how that food was grown and what has come in contact with it. Ultimately, you are reconnecting with your food source and getting to the heart of what it means to live sustainably.

By making the active decision to start your own garden, you are automatically saving money at the grocery store, being more efficient when it comes to repurposing your trash items and producing healthier food sources for your family.

As George Washington once said, "Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth." You have the freedom to grow your own food sources and take control of your health. Moreover, you can grow enough food to have some left over to give to friends and family or preserve it to enjoy during the cooler months. Best of all, you will have enough seeds to help others begin starting their gardens and saving money in the process.