

# Path to Healthy Living

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TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE

## Save Money Gardening

*Growing a garden has the potential to reduce the amount of money spent on groceries, but this depends on the costs involved in growing the crops, types and amounts of vegetables grown, yields that are derived from the garden, and other factors. So, growing a vegetable garden can save you money, if done wisely.*

**First – you have to know a couple of basics of growing vegetables.**

**Vegetable growing basics** There is a wide variety of vegetables that can be successfully grown. The location of the vegetable garden is crucial. Nearly all vegetables need full-sun and a well-drained soil. The vegetable garden also should be located near a source of water.

**Cool season vegetables** (carrots, beets, lettuce, cauliflower, etc.) are planted in early spring and harvested by mid-summer. Warm season vegetables (tomatoes, pepper, egg-

plant, squash, etc.) are planted after the danger of frost has passed and harvested by early fall. With proper planning, it's possible to grow two or three crops in a given area during the growing season.

Using the same space for two or more crops is called succession planting. Other techniques, such as interplanting and companion planting, are other ways to make efficient use of garden space. The more efficiently you use garden space and resources the larger the potential savings. Below are several other important factors to consider when growing a vegetable garden to save you money.



**Select vegetables that you like.** This is simple – you are not likely to take care of - or eat - vegetables that you don't like. So don't waste your time or money planting them in the garden.

**Select vegetables that can be easily stored or preserved.** Selecting vegetables that have a long storage life or that can easily be canned or frozen is a great way to stretch your grocery dollar. Potatoes, onions, sweet potatoes, and winter squash can be stored for several months when stored at the appropriate temperature. Other vegetables, like beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, beets and sweet corn, can be preserved by canning or freezing. Preserving vegetables is a great way to enjoy the “extra” produce later in the year.

**Select vegetables that are expensive to buy in the grocery store.** Grow more expensive items, like tomatoes and melons, or large quantities of vegetables that you purchase regularly. Consider vegetables like beans, beets, onions, spinach, broccoli, peppers, carrots, summer squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, lettuce, peas, and Swiss chard. These vegetables provide the biggest returns on your investment of

fertilizers. Practice the principles of Integrated Pest Management to control insects and diseases, reduc-



ing your reliance on pesticides.



space and time in the garden.

**Do some research and start with a plan.** Decide what you want to grow and determine what will be necessary to be successful. Plan the garden on paper first. Remember, there's no reason why a lack of space means you have to miss out on growing your own food. Container gardening provides the perfect opportunity to grow your own even in the tiniest of spaces.

Research and consider ways to reduce your inputs. Collect rainwater for irrigation, especially if you pay for water. Add compost and well-rotted manure to the garden to improve the soil and reduce the use of

**Start with high quality seeds** – most are relatively inexpensive, and most can be stored for at least one or two years. Find ways to reuse containers, flats, stakes, ties, etc. Remember that saving money with vegetables usually means keeping the costs as low as possible while still growing productive plants.

**Start small.** Like many things, gardening takes practice. Plants will require regular watering, maintenance and harvesting. Growing many different vegetables in a large garden can be overwhelming for new gardeners and can ultimately lead to failure. Limit yourself to just a few types of vegetables the first year. When you become more confident in your abilities and resources, you can increase the size of your vegetable garden and grow a wider variety of crops.

**Finally, have fun growing your own vegetables.** Encourage your neighbors to grow a few vegetables as well. Visit each other's gardens and trade “extra produce” regularly. It's surprising how something as simple as a vegetable garden can impact your life...and hopefully your pocketbook as well!

**Watch for information about upcoming Growing and Nourishing Health Community Garden course near you.**

# Physical Activity for Life

Have you ever heard the saying “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure?” According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), physical activity can prevent one in ten premature deaths. Physical activity can help maintain and improve your health, however, studies show that only half of adults get the amount of physical activity that they need to prevent chronic diseases.

There are benefits for getting the recommended amount of physical activity across the life span. In children, it can reduce the risk of depression, improve bone health, and improve attention. For adults, physical activity lowers the risk of high blood pressure and stroke and reduces arthritis symptoms. Benefits for older adults include improved balance, improved joint mobility, and reduced risk of falling.

## Recommendations by Age

### Preschool-aged Children (ages 3-5 years)

- Physical activity every day throughout the day
- Active play through a variety of enjoyable physical activities
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### Children and Adolescents (ages 6-17 years)

- 60 mins (one hour) or more of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity daily
- A variety of enjoyable physical activities
- As part of the 60 minutes, on at least three days a week, children and adolescents need:
- Vigorous activity such as running or

soccer

- Activity that strengthens muscles such as climbing or push ups
- Activity that strengthens bones such as gymnastics or jumping rope

### Adults (ages 18-64 years)

- At least 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity activity such as brisk walking
- At least two days a week of activities that strengthen muscles
- Aim for the recommended activity level but be as active as one is able

### Older Adults (ages 65 years and older)

- At least 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity activity such as brisk walking
- At least two days a week of activities that strengthen muscles
- Activities to improve balance such as standing on one foot
- Aim for the recommended activity level but be as active as one is able.



BETTER LIVING  
FOR TEXANS

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

# TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

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## Path to Plate..... **Tomato Cucumber Garden Salad**

### INGREDIENTS:

2 cups garden lettuce torn into small pieces  
1 cup roughly chopped tomatoes  
1 cup roughly chopped cucumber

### Dressing:

2 Tbsp chopped fresh basil  
2 tsp crushed garlic  
3 Tbsp lemon juice  
2 tsp olive oil  
1/2 tsp dry red chili flakes

### DIRECTIONS:

Combine all ingredients along with the dressing and toss well. Serve immediately.

