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HOW MUCH MONEY CAN BE SAVED BY GROWING YOUR OWN VEGETABLES?



Laminated Garden Guides
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These days, many people are talking about gardening as a way to save some money on grocery bills. We hear all the time that growing your own vegetables can be cheaper, more interesting, and better for you. Fact is, a lot of people are already growing our own vegetables to beat the credit crunch. And why not? Planting a few seeds in containers in your small garden will yield delicious, organic results - and can save money, too!

Growing organic vegetables is easier than you think! All you do need is some time, good soil, plenty of sunshine, a water source and probably a fence. You can grow your own vegetables even if you don't have masses of space in your garden or a specified vegetable plot, since there are more and more possibilities for growing vegetables in containers. Over the next few years many more people will turn to planting and growing their own vegetable gardens to make sure they are getting top quality vegetables without pesticides!

Another best thing is that vegetables that you grow yourself will taste SO much better than the ones bought in supermarkets! Vegetables like tomatoes, peppers (capsicum), beans etc. taste their best if they are eaten as quickly as possible after harvest! That's because the sugars of some vegetables like corn and peas change to starch very rapidly unless refrigerated immediately.

Growing your own vegetables is a great way to get more variety on your table than you ever thought possible, and to save money in the process. Even if you get only a few plants established and give them reasonable care, and you'll be taking a big step toward freeing yourself from the high price of groceries!

If you've got access to a spot — even a tiny patch — that gets some sun, it might be easier than you think. Before starting a vegetable garden, we advise you to ask yourself these three questions first:

1. What do you have in terms of site (location)?
2. How much time can you spend with your garden each week?
3. What would be most rewarding to grow, both in terms of satisfaction and saving money?

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There are many gardening forums and sites on the Internet where you can search for information that you're looking for. Not only are they a great place to learn, but you can meet other gardeners who share their tips and gardening ideas.

Keep in mind that if you're just beginning a vegetable garden, maybe you won't save so much -- or maybe nothing at all -- because of the upfront cost of buying tools, stakes, netting, etc. That's also the case if you spend a lot on seed or starts and plant a huge garden. Don't do that! You'll just end up getting overwhelmed.

Instead, be creative! From trading seeds and plants with friends and neighbors, making your own fertilizer, saving seeds and growing your own vegetables from produce, using recycled materials to make containers to sharing equipment costs, there are many ways you could cut the cost of starting your own vegetable garden this year!

You likely know that garden-fresh vegetables taste better than store-bought, and do you know why? Home-grown veggies taste better simply because they contain more nutrients. The quality of the soil is what makes your food. In order to feed the billions of people on this planet, farmers must resort to tons of chemical fertilizer to keep our food supply going.

Synthetic fertilizer does not add organic matter to the soil (they mainly add nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium) nor do they replenish the hundreds of micro nutrients needed for well-rounded, nutrient-rich food. This is the trade off for cheap food and industrial farming, but it could be that the vegetables we eat do not fulfill our nutritional needs. Vegetable gardens are fun, and with a little preparation, you can start your own this year! Even if you have never planted a vegetable garden before, you can get started right away, and be very successful!

Remember: If you've never grown a vegetable garden before, it's a good idea to try growing a few simple herbs in a sunny windowsill before going whole-hog on your back yard. If you are a first time gardener, start small!

Just to get you motivated, we made a small report to show how much money could be saved if you grow your own vegetables!

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How much money can be saved by growing your own vegetables [Net Value (A-B)]?

Vegetable	Seeds or plants for each 10 ft. (3m) of row	Yield per 10 ft. (3m) row ¹		Grocery Store		Farmer's Market		Whole Foods	
		lb	kg	Price/lb ²	Value	Price/lb ²	Value	Price/lb ²	Value
Asparagus	7 crowns	3	1,4	\$2,99	\$8,97	\$6,00	\$18,00	\$3,99	\$11,97
Bean (snap)	1 1/2 oz	7	3,0	\$2,49	\$17,43	\$2,97	\$20,79	\$1,99	\$13,93
Broccoli	5-7 plants	8	3,5	\$1,99	\$15,92	\$3,10	\$24,80	\$2,99	\$23,92
Brussels Sprouts	5-7 plants	9	4,0	\$2,99	\$26,91	\$4,50	\$40,50	\$2,99	\$26,91
Cabbage	7-10 plants	20	9,0	\$0,79	\$15,80	\$1,54	\$30,80	\$0,99	\$19,80
Carrots	1/2 packet	8	3,5	\$2,00	\$16,00	\$2,00	\$16,00	\$1,99	\$15,92
Celery	12 plants	8	3,5	\$3,99	\$31,92	\$2,00	\$16,00	\$3,99	\$31,92
Cauliflower	5-10 plants	12	5,5	\$1,49	\$17,88	\$2,83	\$33,96	\$1,99	\$23,88
Cucumbers	1/2 packet	10	4,5	\$1,99	\$19,90	\$1,70	\$17,00	\$2,00	\$20,00
Eggplant	6-8 plants	12	5,5	\$1,79	\$21,48	\$3,50	\$42,00	\$1,99	\$23,88
Endive	1 packet	5	2,2	\$4,99	\$24,95	\$4,99	\$24,95	\$3,99	\$19,95
Garlic	20-30 cloves	3	1,4	\$2,99	\$8,97	\$8,00	\$24,00	\$2,99	\$8,97
Kale	6-8 plants	5	2,2	\$1,99	\$9,95	\$2,31	\$11,55	\$4,98	\$24,90
Leek	10-12 plants	11,5	5,0	\$3,99	\$45,89	\$3,29	\$37,84	\$2,49	\$28,64
Onion	1 packet (60 sets)	11	4,9	\$1,50	\$16,50	\$1,95	\$21,45	\$1,64	\$18,04
Parsley	1 packet	0,5	0,2	\$4,77	\$2,39	\$7,32	\$3,66	\$2,98	\$1,49
Peas	1 1/2 oz	3	1,5	\$4,99	\$14,97	\$3,36	\$10,08	\$3,99	\$11,97
Peppers/Capsicum	5-7 plants	12	5,5	\$2,99	\$35,88	\$4,18	\$50,16	\$3,99	\$47,88
Potatoes	10 pieces	30	14,0	\$1,49	\$44,70	\$2,25	\$67,50	\$1,79	\$53,70
Radish	1 packet	1,6	0,7	\$1,49	\$2,38	\$1,80	\$2,88	\$2,49	\$3,98
Salad Greens	1 packet	7	3,0	\$7,52	\$52,64	\$9,80	\$68,60	\$12,77	\$89,39
Swiss chard	8-10 plants	12	5,5	\$2,49	\$29,88	\$4,70	\$56,40	\$2,49	\$29,88
Squash(summer)	1/2 packet	30	13,0	\$2,00	\$60,00	\$1,85	\$55,50	\$1,99	\$59,70
Squash (winter)	1/2 packet	27	12,0	\$0,99	\$60,73	\$1,20	\$32,40	\$1,49	\$40,23
Tomato	3-6 plants	28	12,0	\$3,99	\$111,72	\$3,32	\$92,96	\$3,99	\$111,72
Zucchini/Courgettes	3-5 plants	6	2,5	\$1,89	\$11,34	\$2,06	\$12,36	\$2,49	\$14,94
<i>basil</i> ³	1/2 packet	0,5	0,2	\$9,00	\$4,50	\$8,52	\$4,26	\$11,96	\$5,98
<i>chives</i> ³	1/2 packet	0,5	0,2	\$2,99	\$1,50	\$7,00	\$3,50	\$39,84	\$19,92
Total (A)					\$697,09		\$839,90		\$803,41
Costs									
Seeds/supplies					\$80,00		\$80,00		\$80,00
Soil test					\$12,00		\$12,00		\$12,00
Compost/Mulch					\$100,00		\$100,00		\$100,00
Pest Control					\$50,00		\$50,00		\$50,00
Water					\$60,00		\$60,00		\$60,00
Total (B)					\$302,00		\$302,00		\$302,00

You could save : **Net Value (A-B)** **\$395,09** **\$537,90** **\$501,41**

¹ **Approximate Vegetable Yields per 10 ft. (3m) row** This is an estimate; results will vary from gardener to gardener. These numbers are considered conservative.

² Cost to buy vegetables will vary due to seasonability and other factors (source: April 2009.).

³ You need only a few plants, space them about 10" apart.

Can You Really Save Money on Growing Vegetables?

There are several good reasons to grow a garden.

And with today's economy, everyone is looking for ways to cut expenses. Lately, we can read all over the Internet and hear all the time that growing vegetables in your garden can be cheaper, more interesting, and better than buying them at supermarkets.

The biggest concern to most people is the fact that it will save so much money. Growing your own vegetables in the garden or in containers, if done properly, can reduce the amount of money you spent on groceries. But, will you succeed in doing so, depends on the costs involved in growing the crops, amounts and types of vegetables you choose to grow, vegetable yields you could expect from your garden, and many other factors. So, to answer the question from the title: "yes" – if done correctly.

It's possible to spend a small fortune on a garden. If you go out and buy everything that you need (or you THINK you need) to start a vegetable garden, and then calculate all of the input costs (tools and equipment, fertilizers, pesticides, water, etc.) associated with gardening, you could end up with an astonishing figure. These costs can add up quickly, even for a small vegetable garden. The trick to saving money with a vegetable garden is limiting the costs, while purchasing the things you really need for your vegetable garden.

And one of the most important things that will determinate if you will save money by growing your own vegetables is choosing the types of vegetables to grow in your garden! This is done by factoring in the cost of seeds, fertilizer and water (the cost of growing vegetables) against the cost of purchasing those same vegetables in a grocery store. Some vegetables simply won't save you much money. For example, corn; because you don't get a high yield of corn from a small garden and because in season corn is inexpensive to buy, it doesn't pay off to grow corn in your garden in order to save money on groceries.

So, What Vegetables Will Give You the Most Bang for the Buck?

If you want to start a vegetable garden to save money, consider growing vegetables that give a big yield and have a significant return for an investment. Good way to do this is to select vegetables that are expensive to buy in the grocery store (like tomatoes and melons) or to grow large quantities of vegetables that you purchase regularly.

If you've never had a vegetable garden before, take a tip from experienced gardener, and take a look at these six classic vegetables you can grow from seed and harvest throughout the summer, and save some money doing so:

- * Bush Snap Beans
- * Carrots
- * Lettuce
- * Peas
- * Bell Pepper s
- * Tomatoes

These vegetable seeds are top sellers year after year, and for a good reason! Of course, the varieties change yearly, but vegetables like tomatoes, beans and carrots all always at the top of the lists.

Except these six vegetables already mentioned, in order to save money growing vegetables consider vegetables like broccoli, beans, beets, carrots, cucumbers, lettuce, onions, peas, peppers, potatoes, summer squash, spinach, tomatoes and Swiss chard. All these vegetables will provide the biggest returns on your investment of space and time you spend in your vegetable garden.

Even a relatively small garden, say 20' x 20', will give you enough room for variety, without being overwhelmed. Of course how much you save by growing your own vegetables depends on the fluctuating cost of food.

Remember, growing vegetables will save you money in the long run - the first year might actually cost more if you need to buy tools, pots and all your seeds, but the second and following years will be much cheaper!

Growing Vegetables to Save Money: Important Tips to Consider for First Time Gardeners

Saving money is one of the biggest benefits to growing a vegetable garden in the mind of many first time gardeners. While this may be a good enough reason to start a vegetable garden, let's not forget that there are others as well. Growing your own vegetables would increase your confidence in food safety and security. You would know where your food is coming from and all the history of plants grown in your own gardens. You would know what chemicals you used (if any), would learn what pests could impose problems and would essentially be able to access affordable and fresh organic food every day from your garden. And all that gardening is good for you, because it's a great form of physical exercise!

For all you first time gardeners, here are several useful tips to consider when growing a vegetable garden in order to save your money.

Select vegetables that you and your family like to eat. Many first time gardeners don't know where to start and which vegetables to grow in their gardens. This is quite simple – you're not likely to take care of vegetables you don't like to eat. So don't waste your time or money planting them in the garden, instead choose the ones you like (and that grow well in your hardiness zone).

Select vegetables that are expensive to buy. To save money, think of growing more expensive items, like tomatoes, or growing large quantities of vegetables that you purchase regularly. You could save money by growing herbs if you use a lot and they're expensive to buy; mixed salad leaves are also cheaper to grow than to buy. Consider vegetables like broccoli, beans, beets, carrots, cucumbers, lettuce, onions, peas, peppers, potatoes, summer squash, spinach, tomatoes and Swiss chard. All these vegetables will provide the biggest returns on your investment of space and time you spend in your vegetable garden.

Select vegetables that can be easily stored or preserved. A lot of vegetables that you can grow in your garden are ideal for storing, freezing and canning, so you are saving that money year round and not just during the growing season. Selecting vegetables that have a long storage life or that can easily be canned or frozen is a great way to save money on your grocery bills. Potatoes, onions, sweet potatoes, and

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winter squash can be stored for several months if stored at the appropriate temperature. Other vegetables, like tomatoes, cucumbers, beans and beets, can be preserved by canning or freezing. Preserving vegetables is a great way to enjoy the surplus produce later in the year.

Do some research and start with a plan. Planning the garden on paper could help you decide what you want to grow and determine what will be necessary to be successful. If you need help, ask family members, neighbors, or friends that can help you. There are many gardening forums and sites on the Internet where you can search for information that you're looking for, including our site www.laminatedgardenguides.com.

Start small. Even a relatively small garden, say 20' x 20', will give you enough room for variety, without being overwhelmed. Plants will require regular maintenance, watering and harvesting. Growing too many different vegetables your first year in a large garden could become overwhelming for you and can ultimately lead to failure. It's better to limit yourself to just a few types of vegetables the first year. Later, when you become confident in your abilities, you can gradually increase the size of your vegetable garden and grow a more and more variety of crops!

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This e-book gives you the basic reasons why and how you should start your vegetable garden. However, there are many other sources of information available on the Internet, including our site:



Laminated Garden Guides

Whether you are new to gardening, or a seasoned gardening pro, *Laminated Garden Guides* are a unique reference point on planting, growing and storing vegetables!

Visit *Laminated Garden Guides*, your one-stop resource to learn how to grow organic vegetables and save money!

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