



Sowing Healthy Seeds

Being healthy takes effort. Planting a seed of health, can be as simple as planting a seed. Gardening has many health benefits and can be enjoyable. Children, seniors, busy moms can all find gardening rewarding, inexpensive, and healthy. Growing your own food can be a pleasant and productive experience. Gardens do not have to be large and can start with a few small pots or containers. Now is the perfect time to start the healthy habit of growing your own food.

Benefits of growing an edible garden include:

Physical activity: Perhaps one of the most important benefits of gardening, this will improve your endurance, strength, flexibility and mobility. This will also help you burn calories and lose weight. Coupled with eating the fruits of your efforts, weight loss will be a snap. Getting your family involved with caring for your garden will also teach healthy habits and make becoming a healthier family much easier.

Relaxation: Gardening helps you to reduce stress levels

Fresh Food: Gardening is a good source of fresh, non-processed, low sodium, low fat, high fiber, ready to eat, inexpensive foods.

Enjoyment: Digging in the dirt, feeling the soft (or strong) breeze, can't get much better than that in the spring time.

If you are new to gardening, an herb garden may be a good

start. These typically can be grown in containers in a sunny spot inside or out. They provide flavorings for your food that do not involve sodium and may reduce blood pressure. Examples of easy to grow herbs are rosemary, basil, chives, sage, mint, oregano, parsley and thyme. Any of these can be started from seed or bought a small plants at your local home improvement store.

A more seasoned grower may be interested in a vegetable/fruit garden that includes tomatoes, strawberries, green beans, onions and carrots. These foods are high in fiber and phytochemicals (which which plays a role in cancer prevention) and low in carbohydrates, calories and fat which is good for your waistline, blood sugar, blood pressure and blood cholesterol.

If you have room to grow, then fruit trees like apple and apricot or bushes like blueberries or blackberry would be a great addition. These foods also provide important cancer prevention agents, are low sodium and low fat.

Including members of the squash family like zucchini and pumpkin are a good way to add variety, fiber and important vitamins and minerals without adding fat or calories.

With these small efforts and a small investment, you can truly sow a seed of health not only for yourself but your family too.