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The Importance of Organic Gardening

by

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Organic Gardening or natural gardening, is using general gardening methods, but without the use of chemicals or synthetic fertilisers and includes sustainable techniques to grow thriving gardens.

These methods have less impact on the earth, assist with the growth of fresh food and also include time and money saving techniques. The aim is to reduce environmental impact and care for nature, whilst enjoying gardening activities.

How to start growing organically.

- If you're already gardening, exclude the use of all chemicals, eg pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and synthetic/chemical fertilisers. These products leave harmful chemical residue in soil for many, many years. They're also harmful to the environment, nature and ourselves.
- Use only organic products and natural 'ingredients' in your garden. *See notes below...*
- Improve soil by composting, hand weeding, applying organic liquid fertilisers/products and using mulch. *Lesson 2 covers these methods.*
- Create a balanced eco-system. Allow nature to exist as it's meant to without us controlling it – "*Work with nature, not against it*"

Let's look at a few common methods of organic gardening...

- Composting & worm farms...improve soil with sustainable methods.
- Use heirloom seeds – these are original/old fashioned seeds that are non genetically modified or soaked in chemicals prior to packaging.
- Propagate cuttings from your garden, or a friend's garden. Saves money and time by having free plants available anytime!
- Mulch gardens to reduce weeds, improve soil, retain nutrients and moisture. No need for chemical weed sprays when you mulch!

- Grow your own healthy food...nurture yourself and your family and nourish mind, body and soul.
- Buy only organic gardening products – these should have a logo or registration with organic certified organisation.

Composting and Worm Farms

One of the best ways to help your garden to thrive, without the use of synthetic chemicals, is by composting or adding a worm farm to your gardening methods.

- Setup a Worm Farm for castings (worm poo) and juice. These are great products to help your garden thrive...and it's all free!!
- Composting and Worm Farms help to reduce waste, improve soil, save money and great for environment.

Get the kids involved, they'll love getting their hands into this stuff!

Find more information here – soiltosupper.com/whats-the-difference-between-composting-and-worms-farms/

Tips to Grow Your Own Organic Food

- Choose organic seeds when possible. There's fabulous online companies that have loads of heirloom and organic seeds to choose from.
- Choose organic potting mix if possible as it has natural fertilisers, not synthetic chemicals
- Organic Liquid fertilisers are a great nutrient boost for your plants
- If you're limited for space consider growing in containers...I grow herbs in an old bath tub!!
- Grow the foods you eat the most and grow plenty of them.
- Try planting fruit trees in ground or containers.
- Inter-cropping is a term used for mixing up veggies, herbs and flowers to support each other's growth and reduce pest problems. It's also good for maintaining a balanced level of nutrients in the soil.
- Apply organic fertilisers regularly to soil to keep up a constant supply of fresh food from your plants.
- Mulch over the soil to reduce weeds and contain moisture and nutrients.

Ideas for Natural Pest and Disease Management

- **Grow Companion Plants** to support plant growth and keep bugs away. A few ideas are growing Tomatoes and Basil or try Dill with Cabbage and Broccoli. Flowers grown throughout your garden also bring in the good bugs. Try Nasturtium, Calendula, Queen Anne's Lace, Alyssum, Marigold or Cosmos...plus more!
- **Install bird baths** and let our feathered friends help to reduce bugs in your garden.
- **Use natural sprays** if needed. You can purchase pre-made natural sprays (look for organic certification on packaging), OR make your own! *Find home-made recipes here* - soiltosupper.com/a-thriving-garden/
- **Increasing bio-diversity** is the best for control of garden problems. Allow nature to take care of everything! Did you know that there's more good bugs than bad ones?? Encourage the good bugs into your garden with flowers and they will help to keep the naughty bug numbers down. Encourage frogs, spiders, lizards, birds and other creatures to your garden to support bio-diversity and a healthy eco-system. Your garden will thrive!
- **Improve the soil.** *(yes I ramble on about healthy soil, BUT it's THE secret to a thriving garden. It's the solution to most gardening problems)* Healthy, pest or disease-free plants grow in healthy soil. If your soil is healthy and full of life then your garden will have minimal problems, and will grow and thrive.

Organic Gardening Tip –

Healthy Soil = Healthy Plant = Healthy Food + Healthy Body :)

Read more on the benefits of gardening naturally here – soiltosupper.com/the-other-world-wide-web/

If you have any questions please post in our Soil to Supper Facebook Club (www.facebook.com/groups/soiltosupperclub) and I'll assist you.

Growing with you,

Cath

It is recommended to use personal protective equipment when undertaking all gardening activities and Soil to Supper is not held responsible for gardeners not adhering to safety requirements while gardening and completing these suggested activities.