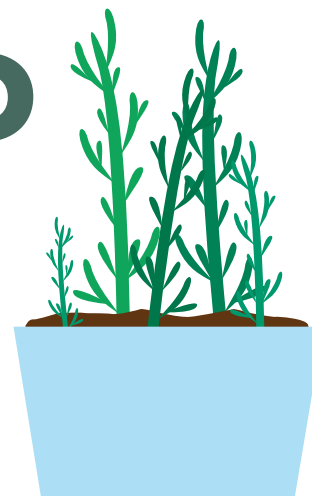


DIG IN TO GOOD HEALTH

Gardening can boost nutrition as well as physical and mental health.



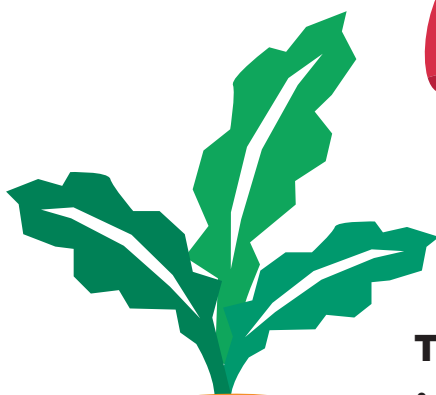
Benefits of gardening

- Increased exercise
- More fruits and vegetables
- Boosts mood and reduces stress
- Saves money on groceries
- May help improve sleep
- Kids like to eat vegetables they've helped grow.



Garden-fresh savings

- SNAP benefits can be used to buy fruit and vegetable seeds and plants.
- Grow foods that have a long storage life, such as potatoes, onions, sweet potatoes and winter squash.
- Start small. Make sure your garden can be easily maintained.
- Invite family, friends or neighbors to share in the costs, work and the harvest.



Tips for container gardening

- The pot should fit the size of the plant. Five-gallon containers work well for tomatoes and squash.
- Each pot should have drainage holes to prevent root rot.
- Use nonmetal, light-colored containers. Metal and dark colors absorb too much heat for plant roots.
- Use potting soil rather than dirt. Dirt compacts in pots, making it hard for plants to grow.
- Soil should be kept moist, not soaked.



Make the most out of a large harvest by preserving it. Contact your local MU Extension office to learn how to safely and effectively can, dry or freeze fruits and vegetables.

Cheesy Pasta With Veggies

Ingredients:

- 4 cups assorted vegetables, sliced (such as zucchini, broccoli, peas, peppers, etc.)
- 1 cup fresh tomatoes, chopped and seeds removed
- 8 ounces whole-wheat pasta
- 1½ tablespoons cooking oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (or ¼ teaspoon garlic powder)
- ½ cup onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese



Directions:

1. Wash and prepare vegetables and tomatoes.
2. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain water from pasta, and save ¼ cup of water.
3. Heat oil in a large skillet. Add garlic and onion, and cook over medium heat 1-2 minutes.
4. Add vegetables except for tomatoes. Cook for about 3-5 minutes. Add Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Add tomatoes last and cook until warm.
5. Add cooked, drained pasta to the vegetables. Add some of the saved pasta water if needed.
6. Add cheeses to mixture. Stir until cheese is mostly melted.
7. Serve immediately and refrigerate any leftovers.

Tip: Make this a one-dish meal by adding a source of protein, such as beans, cooked ground beef or chopped cooked chicken or pork.

Check out the website seasonalandsimple.info for more recipes using locally grown fruits and vegetables!



Did you know?

MU Extension offers gardening and nutrition classes for kids and adults.

Call your University of Missouri Extension office, or visit our website, extension.missouri.edu to find out more!