

Ready to jump into gardening? It can be daunting at first, but gardening is an incredibly rewarding hobby to get into. If you've never tasted garden-fresh vegetables (lots of people haven't), you will be amazed by the sweet, juicy flavors and vibrant textures. There's absolutely nothing quite like fresh veggies, especially if you grow them yourself—which you can! Gardening is considered to be [moderate exercise](#) by the [American Heart Association](#), and you can easily burn the same [number of calories](#) gardening as you would at the gym. Digging, raking and mowing are [particularly effective](#) at burning calories.

The UC Master Gardener Program is an example of an effective partnership between the University of California and passionate volunteers and has resources available for you.

## 10 Steps to Starting a Garden

1. Decide what you'd like to grow based off of [growing conditions](#).
2. [Choose a location](#) with the sunlight and shade needed. Watch out for wildlife, pet damage and children's play areas.
3. Plan your garden beds. [Raised beds](#) are easier to work in but dry out. Garden beds should be 3-4ft across and 10ft long.
4. Invest in [basic garden tools](#).
5. Test your soil with [5 easy tests](#).
6. [Prepare the soil](#). Most plants prefer a deep, well-drained, fertile soil rich in organic matter.
7. Choose the right seeds or transplants. Learn which plants grow directly seeded or by transplant by visiting the [seed calendar](#).
8. Plant with care and view the [gardening guide](#) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that shows planting depth, plant spacing, days to germination and days to harvest.
9. Nurture your garden. Plants need around one-two inch of water per week during the growing season. Check a [watering chart](#). Over watering is as bad as under watering. Always check the soil. Monitor pests and if there is a problem, there should be an organic solution.
10. Enjoy your [harvest!](#)

## No Ground? No Problem

As long as you have sun and access to water, gardening in containers lets you grow vegetables, herbs and flowers. A container garden can be as simple as a few pots of herbs in a window box or an array of outdoor tubs that you rotate seasonally. A container garden makes a great first garden project for all ages. All you need is something that can hold soil with small holes in the bottom for excess water to drain.

Plants that grow in containers are more dependent on a gardener for watering than most plants growing in the ground. Because plants have limited volume of soil they tend to dry out more quickly.

1. Provide the right [light](#) and temperature.
2. Water your containers and understand that plants that grow in containers are more dependent on a gardener.
3. Use [quality potting soil](#).
4. [Feed your plants](#) if your soil does not already have fertilizer in it.
5. Creating [optimal drainage](#).
6. Selecting the perfect container: wood, ceramic, self-watering, DIY but make sure it is wide and flat

to avoid overcrowding.

7. Choose [seeds](#) or [seedlings](#).
8. [Garden how you live](#) and container garden that works with your lifestyle.

We hope you find these tips and resources helpful. [UCR Healthy Campus](#) and the [Faculty/Staff Wellness Program](#) remains committed to the health and well-being of the campus community.

If you have any questions or would like more information, feel free to reach out to [healthycampus@ucr.edu](mailto:healthycampus@ucr.edu) or [wellness@ucr.edu](mailto:wellness@ucr.edu).

Stay safe and healthy!