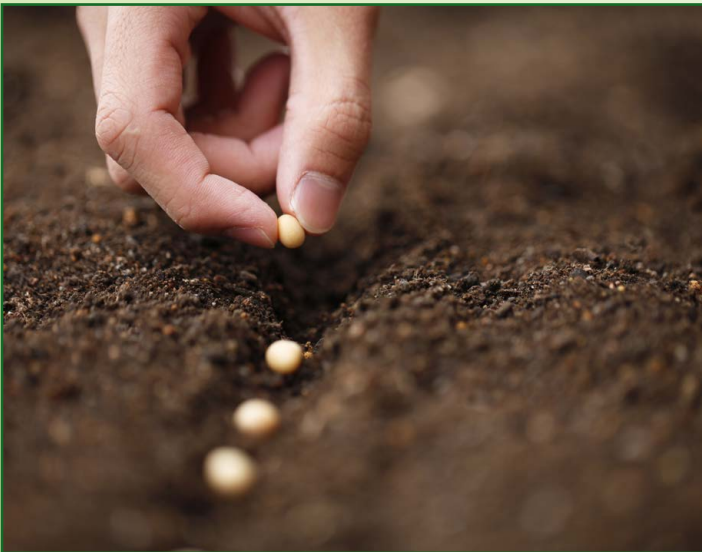




Gardens & Food Safety



Planning & Planting



Location

Choosing the right location for your garden is very important. In order to prevent contamination of soil and produce, avoid building a garden near:

- Waste storage areas
- Areas prone to flooding
- Septic systems
- Parking lots

Building the Garden

If you decide to build a raised garden, make sure to use safe materials. Building a garden with chemically treated materials, such as pressure-treated lumber and railway ties, can contaminate the soil.



Planting

Once you pick the right location and are ready to plant, follow these tips for a safe, healthy garden:

- Start with clean soil
- If you decide to use fertilizer, use only store-bought fertilizer
- Hands should be washed properly after gardening
- If clothing becomes dirty, it should be changed and washed in order to prevent contaminating other areas.



Growing Season

Keeping Pests Away

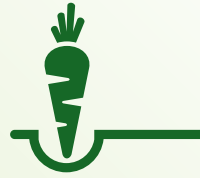
Pests, such as rabbits, deer and rodents, can impact the health and productivity of your garden. To keep pests away, maintain the area surrounding your garden. Also, remember to remove rotting fruits and vegetables as these can attract animals and rodents. Hand pulling weeds is the safest way to keep the garden weed-free, which also deters pests. The use of pesticides is not recommended.



Watering the Garden

Watering your fruits and vegetables is an important part of helping them grow. There are a few things to keep in mind when watering your garden:

- Use safe, potable water supplies only
- Avoid using water collected by a rain barrel when watering fruits and vegetables
- Remember: If you wouldn't drink it, don't water edible plants with it!



Harvest Time

Preventing Cross-Contamination

- Wash hands before and after picking produce
- Brush, shake or rub off soil and debris before storing produce in harvest containers
- The harvest containers should be smooth, readily cleanable and non-absorbent. These containers should be washed and thoroughly cleaned regularly



Storing and Preparing Garden Produce

The fruits and vegetables from the garden should be washed and/or prepared in the kitchen on a thoroughly cleaned work surface. Hands and utensils should also be thoroughly cleaned before they come into contact with the produce. Produce from the garden and store-bought produce should be stored separately. Always wash fruits and vegetables before eating or cooking with them.