

Fall into Healthy Habits

The weather is getting cooler, but Florida's growing season is year-round. Start a vegetable garden!

Challenge yourself this fall—get active and start a fall vegetable garden. Growing your own garden is an easy way to get fresh air and exercise, and a good way to eat healthy while saving money.

Planning

Before you start, pick what kinds of vegetables you'll grow and where you'll grow them. Select a spot for your garden that is close to the house, near a source of water, and in an area that gets at least six hours of sunlight a day.

Preparing

There are many types of soil in Florida, and it's usually best to improve your dirt by adding organic matter (such as compost or peat moss). Loosen your soil with a spade or gardening hoe a few weeks before you begin planting. When it's time to plant, rake the soil until the surface is smooth.

Irrigation & Drainage

How often you should water your garden depends on your soil type and the age of your plants. Young plants should be watered regularly, in small amounts. Older vegetables need larger amounts of water less regularly. Sandy soils require water more often than clay-based soils. If the ground around your plants doesn't keep water well, make ring shaped mounds around the bases to make sure water is fully absorbed. Cover the inside of the mounds with mulch (pine straw, shredded bark, grass clippings) to help conserve moisture.

Harvesting

Many vegetables can be harvested at different stages. Leaf lettuce, for example, can be picked as young as you like; snip some leaves, and it will continue to grow. Summer squash (zucchini) and cucumber can be harvested when the fruit is just a few inches long, or it can be allowed to grow to full size. The general rule: If it looks good enough to eat, it probably is. With many vegetables, the more you pick, the more the plant will produce.

Pests & Diseases

Pests and diseases are ongoing problems for most vegetable gardeners. Although some problems may require special solutions, there are some general guidelines you can follow.

Deer and rabbits. Fence in your garden to stop deer and rabbits from eating your vegetables. The bottom of the fence should extend about 6 inches under the soil and the top should stand at least 8 feet tall. This will stop rabbits from digging under and deer from jumping over.

Insects. Row covers, which are lightweight sheets of clear plastic, protect young crops against many common insects. Row covers are also helpful to prevent damage from light frosts. Wear gardening gloves to pick larger insects off by hand.

Fungal diseases. Reduce fungal diseases by watering the soil, not the

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Calendar

Oct. 21

- **Healthy Start Childbirth Education class**

Oct. 22

- **WIC Breastfeeding class**

Oct. 23

- **Red Ribbon Week kickoff, Ocala Police Department**

Oct. 24

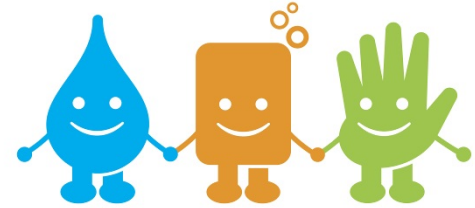
- **World Food Day Kids Activities at Ocala-Headquarters Library**

Oct. 25

- **Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk at the College of Central Florida**

For goodness sake wash your hands!

Global Handwashing Day falls on Oct. 15, a reminder that washing your hands is more than just polite. Clean hands save lives.



Global Handwashing Day

It's like a magic drug that can help prevent colds, the flu, norovirus and myriad other illnesses. It isn't a pill you put in your mouth. It's a practice that can help keep germs from getting inside you in the first place.

Washing your hands is a simple thing and it's the best way to prevent infection and illness.

"Washing your hands is the single most effective way to prevent illness," said Amy Reilly, senior community health nurse supervisor at the Florida Department of Health in Marion County. "If you keep your hands clean, you have a much better chance of avoiding the flu and other diseases. You'll also help prevent spreading infections if you become ill."

Hand washing is easy to do. Keeping hands clean prevents illness at home, at school, and at work. Hand hygiene practices are key prevention measures in healthcare settings, in daycare facilities, in schools and public institutions, and for the safety of our food.

When should you wash your hands?

- After using the bathroom
- After coughing or sneezing
- After cleaning a child who has gone to the bathroom
- After changing a diaper
- After touching books and money
- Before preparing food
- Before eating
- After petting an animal

What is the right way to wash your hands?

- Wet your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub them well. Be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry.
- Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet.
- Help children wash their hands to be sure they do a good job.

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can reduce the number of germs on hands, but remember that washing is your best choice.

Looking for more information? Go to www.cdc.gov/handwashing/.

Need Info? Call 352-629-0137

Birth & Death Certificates ext. 2064
Communicable Diseases ext. 2088
Dental Clinic 352-622-2664
Environmental Health ext. 2086

Family Planning ext. 2091
Health Education ext. 2195
Healthy Start ext. 2275
HIV/AIDS ext. 2073
Immunizations ext. 2017

Maternity ext. 2089
School Health ext. 2043
Sexually Transmitted Diseases ext. 2073
WIC & Nutrition ext. 2124

Flu Season Is Here Get Vaccinated Today

Who should get the vaccine?

EVERYONE 6 MONTHS AND OLDER

PEOPLE AT HIGH RISK

Everyone **6 MONTHS OF AGE AND OLDER** should get the flu vaccine. Seasonal flu vaccines have a very good safety track record.

It is especially **IMPORTANT TO GET THE VACCINE IF YOU, SOMEONE YOU LIVE WITH, OR SOMEONE YOU CARE FOR IS AT HIGH RISK** of complications from the flu.



- Children & Infants
- Pregnant Women
- Seniors
- People with Disabilities
- People with Health Conditions
- Travelers & People Living Abroad

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leaves of plants. If you use a sprinkler, do it early in the day so the leaves will dry by nightfall. Remove diseased plants. If a plant falls to a disease, remove it promptly and throw it in the trash; don't add sick plants to your compost pile.

Grow disease-resistant varieties. Check garden catalogs and websites for varieties that offer the most protection.

Change the location of your plants each year. For example, if you grew tomatoes in the northwest corner of your garden this year, put them in the northeast corner next year. This reduces the chance of pests sticking around your garden.

Find out the best times to plant. Download the Florida Gardening Calendar at: www.solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/calendar/.

Connect with the Florida Department of Health online

