

Plan a garden party

Written by By Melissa Martin For the Sun
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According to news outlets, people are planting. Why? Humans want to become more self-sufficient because of the pandemic. Having available food at the backdoor is comforting. Picking your own produce is pleasant. Spending time outdoors is refreshing.

The 50th anniversary of Earth Day in 2020 coincided with the coronavirus outbreak, which may have factored into the seed-buying craze. Whatever the reason, growing vegetables is a good thing. By the way, tomatoes are classified as a fruit.

“The victory garden movement began during World War I and called on Americans to grow food in whatever spaces they could — rooftops, fire escapes, empty lots, backyards. It maintained that there was nothing more valuable than self-sufficiency, than working a little land, no matter how small, and harvesting your own eggplant and tomatoes,” according to a recent article in *The New York Times*.

So plan a plant palooza with your spouse and kids. Younger children love playing in the dirt—teens, not so much. Don't forget the sunflower seeds and herbs. Dance in the dirt. Talk to the tomatoes. Converse with the cucumbers. Laugh with the lettuce. Joke with the artichoke. Can you dig it? Argh—a poor pun indeed.

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Newbies can visit YouTube and view gardening videos for helpful hints. And great-grandparents are full of gardening wisdom.

I encourage gardeners, both new and seasoned, to purchase plants locally from family owned greenhouses. Start with places in your county, then expand your radius in other areas of your state. Gardening gals and guys can also order plants online from gardening centers.

Let's get serious about weeds. These pesky plants will crash the party. Dandelions get my dander up! So grab a hoe and go. "A weed is but an unloved flower," surmised Ella Wilcox. Hmm. Let a dandelion farmer fancy the dandelions—not me.

Another idea is to learn about bees, butterflies, and beneficial bugs. Invite pollinators to your garden party. What about backyard birding? Birds eat insects, so invite our feathered friends to the juicy jamboree. Make a toad house and invite these amphibians to the shindig. Find info about the flowers native to your area and go wild with wildflower seeds.

Go party with the peppers! Waltz with the worms. Tango with the turnips. Cha-cha-cha with the cabbage. Can-can with the carrots. Giggle with the garlic. Rumba with the rutabagas. Yak with the yams. No masks required for veggies and fruits.

"Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace. " –May Sarton

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