

April 16, 2022

Now is the Time to Think Garden!

April is the perfect time to get your garden ready. Here in Alpine it will often freeze any greenhouse starts you buy and plant before Mother's Day. However, you can be preparing your beds or containers, starting seeds, planning your irrigation system, and pest protection, and you can always be composting. While seeds are often picked over in March they are also on sale some places in April. Cold weather crops like peas, spinach, and radishes can be put in soon, and the irrigation water should have been turned on by the 15th to get them going! If you have a greenhouse you will most likely have lettuce already along with some good little tomato and pepper starts.

There are many videos on YouTube if you want to learn more about gardening from how to garden completely in containers to how to plant in raised beds/grow boxes or even how to create a "no-till garden" directly on the ground. Anyone who really wants to find a way to have a garden can do it. It just takes some commitment and effort. Unless you have all the equipment and nutrients to grow hydroponically, you will need the following for any kind of gardening:

1. Soil that is nutrient rich with enough mulch to hold moisture while not staying soggy.
2. A place that has at least 8 hours a day of full sunlight. (Most vegetable plants require full sun rather than shade.)
3. Water—We live in a dry climate, so gardening here requires irrigation on a regular basis. Watering works best in the cool hours of the day (morning or evening).

4. Seeds and/or plant starts.
5. The ability to remove weeds (I love a pair of garden gloves, but you can do it without).
6. A way to protect your garden from deer, rabbits, and squirrels. Even if all you can do for now is add some highly-scented soap on a stick to your pot or spread nylon netting over your lettuce patch you can find ways to make this work.
7. *Garden fertilizer of your choice is helpful, especially if you don't have nutrient-rich soil to start with.

*Challenge for this article—Begin a garden of some kind for this year even if you can only start with a container in which you put both flowers and vegetable plants. If Disneyland can grow beans, cabbage, and tomatoes in their flower beds so can you!

Benefits from Gardening

I have heard a home-grown tomato referred to as the \$10 tomato. If you have to buy a special container, special soil, fertilizer, garden gloves and tools, and insect spray to grow a few tomatoes that might be the case. However, as you are starting your garden consider ways that you can make it sustainable for continuing next year. The next year the startup costs will be much lower. Then also consider these extra benefits.

- You learn a great self-reliance skill the more you garden.
- You will improve your health with natural vitamin D that comes from exposure to the sun. (You should still wear a hat to avoid over exposure.)
- You have the opportunity to have organic produce free of chemicals.
- Growing things that produce food has proven to improve mental health.
- The more you garden the more you increase your capacity for self-reliance.
- Anything you have in a garden is food on hand in a crisis.

Having the Tools You Need

Do you have basic tools like a shovel, a rake, a hoe? For some people that may mean a saw, a hatchet or axe, pruners/loppers or other things. Ask yourself, "If the stores all closed tomorrow for an indefinite period of time what tools would I want to have on hand to garden or other things I would need to do? It is a good thing to consider what hand tools would be valuable in an emergency and work to acquire them as you can afford them.

*It is wise to always have good work gloves on hand for each family member. I like them for working in my yard, but if there was an earthquake or extreme storm and you needed to be clearing glass or debris they would be a very welcome protection to have.

*Challenge for this article—Make a list of tools you think you might need. Then evaluate what you have and what you need. Make a plan for acquiring what you need.

A Family Affair

President Spencer W Kimball and President Ezra Taft Benson both counseled us to grow a garden. A song about the prophet telling us to plant a garden was added to the Children's Songbook. Families in the Church all over the world grew gardens together. This became a hobby for many, and their children continued it because they learned by participating. Still others quit after a while.

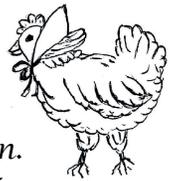
I have a friend who said she used to buy wrapped candy and throw it throughout the garden before she had her children go weed. The rule was that you only got the candy in the places and rows you weeded. She thought her kids hated gardening, but to her delight they now have families of their own and are starting to garden themselves. The same thing happened with my family. We all had turns helping in my dad's garden when we were growing up. Now all of my brothers and sisters have a garden every summer.

In our modern world where things change often and electronics become obsolete almost overnight, it is easy to think that

following council such as this is obsolete when the prophet who said it is gone. There is a current pattern of, "Been there, done that, got the T-shirt." However, I have never seen or heard this counsel revoked and I have never known anyone to suffer from following the prophet. In fact, in the near future I think that this counsel will prove to be a great blessing to those who have consistently practiced gardening and improved their soil as they went so that it will yield a good harvest.

*Challenge for this article-Find a place and way to grow a garden even if it is only a tiny one this time.

Notes from Red Hen



Dear Aunt Bitty,

I thank you so much for teaching me to garden. I am still able to supply a lot of the food that I need for myself and my chicks, and my chicks are learning how to tend a garden and be self-reliant. I can't seem to grow enough for the dog, the cat, the pig, or the other farm animals here though. They don't yet have any inclination to help or to grow their own. They just let the farmer feed them and when they get hungry they seem to think that my garden belongs to the farm and they should have from it what they want. If they ate my garden and something happened to the farmer we would all go hungry. I wish they would think ahead instead of just living for "today."

As you taught me so long ago, I have been able to collect seed each year when the farmer thinks his garden is spent. If we do it right away after he harvests what he wants we are able to glean enough for us. I have peas, tomatoes, beans, beats, corn, and spinach that we have collected. This year a carrot and some kale are going to seed. We will add those to our store for next spring!

Love, Red