URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to grow organic vegetables

With the mass population of consuming organic items spreading across America, it's important to know what the term organic means and how to grow organic vegetables in your garden. Not only does organic produce sell for more, but it also is more environmentally friendly to the earth and potentially healthier to consumer.

What does organic means?

Organic consumption has been a hot topic lately, but eating something with the word "organic" in it doesn't make the item healthier in terms of caloric content. Instead, organic means items within the product must be certified organic, meaning items like pesticides, chemical fertilizers or dyes are not used to grow the items. However, the remaining 5 percent can be processed but only with additives from an approved list. And although there is no extra mineral or vitamin content to organic vegetables, being organic means harsh chemicals aren't being used. In other growth methods, those chemicals could potentially harm the earth or even our bodies. Some swear that organic foods taste better than non-organic foods, but others say that's up to the taster.

How do I grow organic vegetables in my garden?

The first step to starting an organic garden is testing the soil. Harmful build-up may be present, and since you won't be able to feed your vegetables with fertilizer, you want to make sure the soil will provide the vegetables with the nutrients they need. Once this is complete, beginning an organic bed is the same process as beginning any



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other bed. You want to place the vegetable garden in full sunlight, on flat land and ensure there are no terrain issues like rocky soil in the way of your future vegetables' roots. Once that's taken care of, ensure your garden is close to a good compost source because, since you won't be using the majority of fertilizers or chemicals, you will want good compost to better the growth of your vegetables.

When planting, group your plants tightly and don't walk on the soil where the plants are growing. Raised beds do a good job at this. Grouping the plants ensures weeds don't take over, but be sure to leave plenty of space between the rows of plants so fungal diseases don't take hold if there's poor air circulation.

Which plants to choose for organic growth:

There are certain types of vegetables that are better to grow in an organic setting than









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others. One example is indeterminate tomatoes because the vines will continue to grow larger and produce fruit until the first frost. Another example is non-hybrid pole beans which also continue to grow and produce until frost as long as the gardener continues to pick the beans. Zucchini, swiss chard and peas are also great options because their harvest is always abundant. These plants don't take fertilizer to produce a healthy bounty of veggies for harvest.

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