URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Benefits of organic gardening:

It seems everyone has taken to the topic of growing organically. People are more health conscious than ever, and they seek out organically grown produce when shopping. Gardeners are beginning to realize the importance of growing organically as well, and so more and more local, organic farms are popping up.

What does it mean to be organic?

Foods that are USDA-certified organic are foods that are grown and processed according to the federal guidelines. Produce is considered organic if it has been grown on soil with no prohibited materials or substances applied for at least three years before the organic harvest. For example, prohibited substances can include synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Some synthetic substances are allowed in organic gardening, but they must be on the approved list.

Why should someone grow organically?

The main reason for growing organically is gardeners will know exactly what has gone into growing their vegetables. If they grow organically and don't use pesticides or synthetic fertilizer, they know their vegetables are safe to eat. However, there are many other benefits to growing organically.

For example, growing organically creates an overall healthier soil. If you consistently treat soil with chemicals, it may make the soil unhealthy and degrade it to a point of not being able to thrive on its own. Organic



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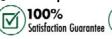
farming also leads to less soil erosion, and a study found that organic gardeners had 8 more inches of topsoil than non-organic gardeners.

Sometimes, pesticides may treat the pests harming your garden, but the chemicals also can hurt the good bugs as well. Organic gardening is much better on the environment and the animals and bugs within it than synthetic pesticides. By gardening organically, gardeners are helping to preserve the animals' environment and live safely. In addition, if gardeners also farm and have any farm animals, those animals won't be exposed to harmful chemicals.

When it comes to eating organic food, many claim that organic tastes better than non-organic. An independent study also discovered that organically grown foods had high nutritional content than their non-organically grown counterparts. For example, organically grown food contained 27 percent more Vitamin C, 29 percent











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more magnesium, 21 percent more iron and 14 percent more phosphorous.

Ways to garden organically:

If a gardener is used to using synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, there are some beginning steps to take to get started on a healthier, more organic lifestyle. For example, till the garden and use mulch, composted manure, food or leaf remains to supplement your soil. This also allows gardeners to begin exploring different ways of composting and eliminating food waste by using it to organically fertilize their gardens. As for natural ways to reduce pests, look into row covers or utilize companion planting, as some plants will naturally repel pests when planted near others.



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