

Grow Your Health: Benefits of Growing Your Own Food



1. GET THE NUTRITION YOU NEED & ENJOY TASTIER FOOD!

According to the University of Colorado Extension home grown food have more minerals and nutrients that we need. Growing your own food allows you to pick fruits and vegetables when they are ripe and since they don't have far to travel to your table, they have the maximum amount of vitamins and minerals. This is often why they end up tasting better! Organic farming starts with the nourishing the soil, which eventually leads to nourishing the plant and, ultimately our bodies!

2. SAVE MONEY & INCREASES YOUR INTAKE

Growing your own food can help reduce your grocery bill. Instead of spending hundreds of dollars and month at the grocery store, spend time in the garden, outside, exercising, and learning to grow your own food. When fruits and vegetables are only steps away, you're more likely to fill your plate and eat them! Planting \$50 worth of seeds in your yard can yield up to \$1,200 of produce according to the University of Missouri.

3. PROTECT FUTURE GENERATIONS

The average child receives four times more exposure than an adult to pesticides in food. Growing food in your own garden allows you to minimize your family's exposure to pesticides. It also teaches children to learn where food comes from, spend time with you and can help improve the whole family's eating habits.

4. PREVENT SOIL EROSION

The Soil Conservation Service estimates more than 3 billion tons of topsoil are eroded from the United States' croplands each year. Soil erodes seven times faster than nature can build up. Soil lays the foundation in organic farming. Learning to garden organically and use fertilizer from our own kitchen & yard wastes will nourish the soil and protect from erosion.

5. PROTECT WATER QUALITY

Water makes up two-thirds of our body mass and covers three-fourths of the planet. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates pesticides contaminate the groundwater in 38 states in the US, polluting the primary source of drinking water for more than half the country's population. By growing your own organic garden we can reduce the number of pesticides contaminating our drinking water.



6. SAVE ENERGY

Farms have changed drastically in the last three generations, from family-based small businesses dependent on human energy to large-scale factory farms. Modern farming uses more petroleum than any other single industry, consuming 12 percent of the country's totally energy supply. More energy is now used to produce synthetic fertilizers than to till, cultivate and harvest all the crops in the United States. If you are growing your own food in the city, you are cutting down on transportation and pollution costs. Growing your own edible garden also reduces trips to the grocery store and lowers the carbon emissions to transport commercially-grown produce to the grocery store.

7. KEEP CHEMICALS OFF YOUR PLATE

Many pesticides approved for use by the EPA were registered long before extensive research linking these chemicals to cancer and other diseases had been established. If you are growing your own food, you have control over what does, or doesn't, go into it. The bottom line is that pesticides are poisons designed to kill living organisms (have you heard about the bees?) and can may harm humans in excess.



8. COUNTS AS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Gardening is a great way to keep active during the summer! Your garden will need attention throughout the spring and summer months pulling weeds, watering and of course picking! It's a great way to enjoy the outdoors, keep moving and reduce your risk of health problems!



9. PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY

Mono-cropping is the practice of planting large plots of land with the same crop year after year. While this approach tripled farm production between 1950 and 1970, the lack of natural diversity of plant life has left the soil lacking in natural minerals and nutrients. To replace the nutrients, chemical fertilizers are used, often in increasing amounts. Single crops are also much more susceptible to pests, making farmers more reliant on pesticides. Despite a tenfold increase in the use of pesticides between 1947 and 1974, crop losses due to insects have doubled—partly because some insects have become genetically resistant to certain pesticides.

10. HELP BEAUTIFY YOUR COMMUNITY

Besides being used to grow food, community gardens are also a great way to beautify a community, and to bring pride in ownership. Studies have also shown whether gardening at home or at a community garden can help reduce rates of depression.

Source: <http://foodmatters.tv/articles-1/top-10-reasons-to-grow-your-own-organic-food>