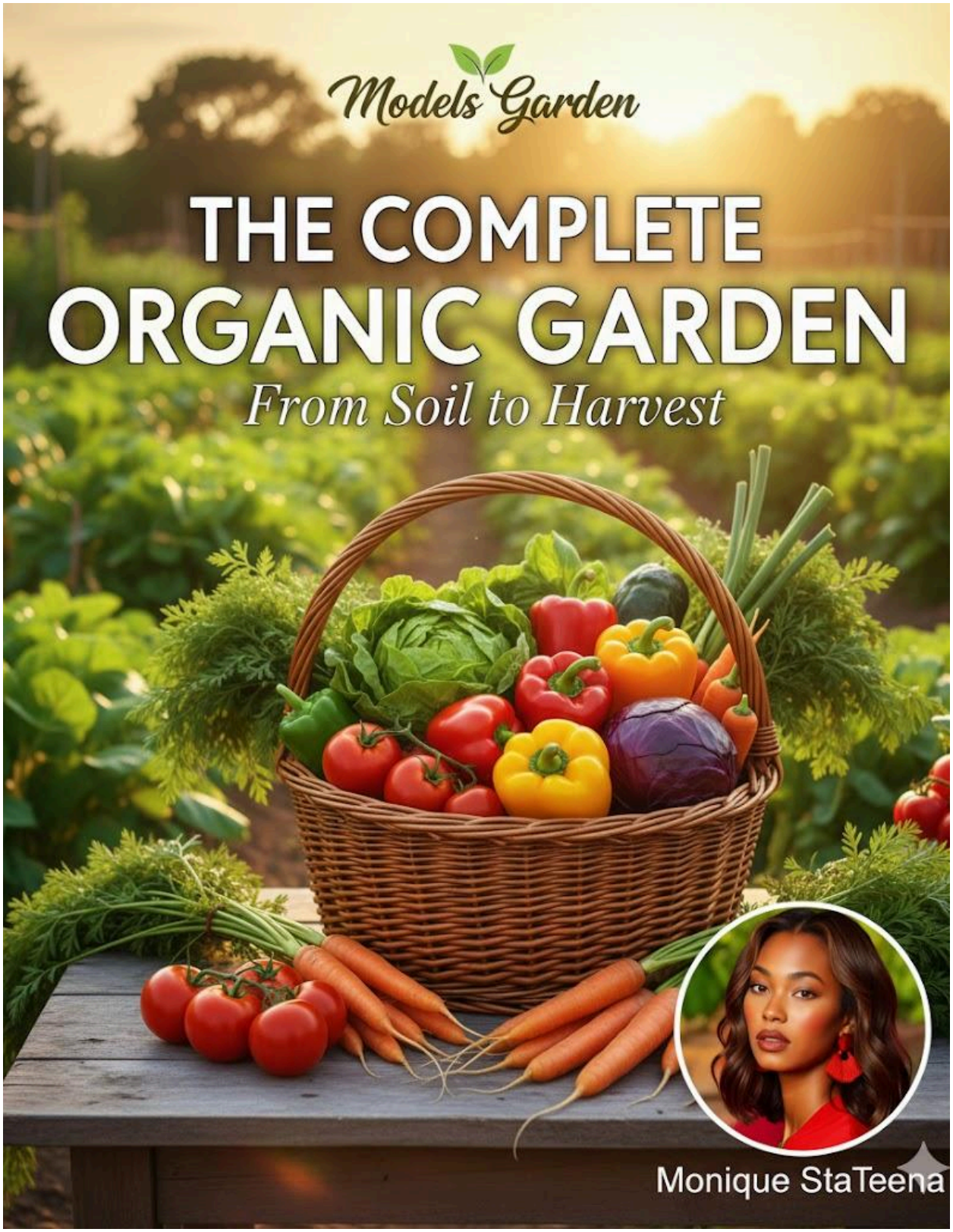
Models Garden
THE COMPLETE
ORGANIC GARDEN
From Soil to Harvest
Monique StaTeena

THE COMPLETE ORGANIC GARDEN

From Soil to Harvest:

A Comprehensive Guide to Growing Your Own Food

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INTRODUCTION

Over 20 million people in North America will be growing their own food this year. Organic gardening has been growing in popularity for years, and for good reason. The economy has many of us looking for ways to save on our food bill, and growing your own produce is one of the easiest ways to do this.

According to the National Gardening Association, the average gardener spends about $70 on their crops – but grows around $600 worth of vegetables!

Beyond the savings, we all want to be sure that the food our families are eating is as healthy as possible. An organic garden ensures the safest, healthiest produce for everyone. Simply put, organic gardening means growing your plants without using man-made chemicals. These chemicals can not only collect on your food and contaminate it but can kill off beneficial insects that help your garden grow better.

Every year, the Environmental Working Group releases a "Dirty Dozen" list – the top twelve USDA-tested produce with the highest pesticide loads. Repeat offenders often include celery, spinach, potatoes, peppers, kale, and tomatoes. Growing your own eliminates this worry.

What could be better than simply stepping outside your door and harvesting your own produce? Growing your own vegetables is not only healthier and tastier, but it is also cost-efficient. A hundred pounds of tomatoes from a hundred square feet. Twenty pounds of carrots from 24 square feet. All you need is a little patience and some smart tactics.

This book combines essential organic gardening strategies with specific growing guides for 22 of the most popular fruits and vegetables, giving you everything you need to start the garden of your dreams.



PART I: THE ESSENTIALS OF ORGANIC GARDENING

Tip #1: Choose Location Carefully

Choose a location for your garden that gets plenty of sun and is close to your water source (usually your garden hose). Most vegetables need about six hours of sunlight a day. Fruiting plants, like tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, and pumpkins, prefer eight to ten hours.

- **Sun Orientation:** Plant taller crops like corn, tall tomatoes, or pole beans on the north or west side of the garden so they don't shade the other plants.
- **Shade Management:** If you have shade in parts of your garden, consider planting "cool" plants such as lettuce, peas, spinach, collards, and root veggies (potatoes, carrots, turnips, and beets) there.
- **Wind & Traffic:** Keep your plants out of strong winds that could break their tender stems. Avoid areas of high foot traffic where tender plants can be trampled.
- **Drainage:** Look for an area that gets enough water without flooding. You want the soil moist but not sodden.

Tip #2: Test Your Soil

You always want to start with healthy soil. You can get a soil testing kit from your local extension agent. You need to know whether or not your soil is healthy enough before you put the first plant into the ground.

- **Structure:** The most important soil component is organic matter, like manure, peat moss, or compost. Your finished soil should be neither sandy nor too compact. When the mix is right, the soil will bind together when squeezed, but break back apart if disturbed.
- **Compost:** This is the best option for organic matter because it contains decayed

micro-organisms from plants.

- **Mulch:** Reduce weed growth by spreading a one- to three-inch layer of mulch on top of your soil. This lessens fungal disease spores landing on plants and keeps them cooler in summer and warmer in winter.

Tip #3: Use Planters

If you don't have a large yard, you don't have to give up your dreams of vegetable harvesting. Most veggies do quite well in planters, whether it is a smaller windowsill garden or a larger outdoor container.

- **Vertical Gardening:** Give your vining plants – tomatoes, pole beans, squash, melons, cucumbers – a trellis or support. They take up less space and are decorative.
- **Airflow:** Vertical plants pick up fewer diseases because less of the plant is in contact with the soil.
- **Light:** Make sure your containers get plenty of natural light or use a professional "grow bulb."

Tip #4: Grow Based on Your Location

Decide what you want to plant based on your climate, space, tastes, available time, and level of expertise.

- **Start Simple:** Newcomers might want to start with easier plants like carrots, beans, cucumbers, peppers, and lettuce.
- **Timing:** "Cool season" plants like lettuce, spinach, and root veggies can be planted in Spring. "Warm season" veggies like tomatoes and peppers shouldn't be planted until the soil warms up.

- **Planning:** Make your garden ten feet long with eleven rows, running north to south to maximize sunlight. Leave a pathway between rows for weeding and harvesting.

Tip #5: Think Outside the Box

Pay attention to how you arrange your plants to maximize your yield.

- **Triangles vs. Rows:** You can fit 10-14% more plants in a triangle arrangement than in a square. Just be careful not to space them too closely.
- **Health Benefits:** Did you know that 45 minutes of gardening burns the same amount of calories as running 1.5 miles in 15 minutes? Gardening gets you out in the fresh air and sunshine.
- **Waste Reduction:** Gardening helps reduce food waste. In the US, organic waste is a major component of landfills. By gardening, you are less likely to waste the results of your hard labor.

Tip #6: Pick Your Crops

Don't just buy whatever is on the shelf. Look for organic seeds and seedlings (look for the USDA Organic logo).

- **Know Your Plants:**
    - *Roots:* Carrots, beets, turnips, radishes.
    - *Leaves:* Lettuce, kale, cabbage, chard, spinach.
    - *Fruits (Botanical):* Tomatoes, eggplant, zucchini, pumpkins.
- **Companions:** Plant marigolds with your veggies; they repel insects.
- **Annuals vs. Perennials:** Most vegetables are annuals (replant every year). Asparagus and rhubarb are perennials (come back every year).

Tip #7: Clean Your Garden

Plan on weeding almost daily. Pulling weeds is easiest after rain or watering.

- **Hygiene:** At least once a week, walk through your garden picking up shed foliage. Many diseases spread from dead leaves. Throw these in the garbage, not the compost heap.
- **Pest Removal:** If you see insect pests, pick them off (use gloves if needed). Aphids can often be washed off.
- **Barriers:** Use copper tape for slugs/snails and cardboard collars for cutworms.

Tip #8: Call in Reinforcements

For most vegetables, one inch of water per week is enough.

- **Watering:** Invest in a soaker hose or drip line to deliver water directly to roots. Wet leaves can encourage mold and mildew.
- **Beneficial Insects:** Encourage bees (pollination) and ladybugs/praying mantises (pest control). Flowers that attract them include bachelor's button, cosmos, black-eyed Susan, marigold, sunflower, and zinnia.

Tip #9: Pairing and Timing

Interplanting compatible crops can save space and result in a better yield.

- **The Three Sisters:** Corn, beans, and squash. Corn supports beans; squash shades the ground to prevent weeds.
- **Other Pairs:** Tomato/Basil/Onions; Lettuce/Peas; Carrots/Onions/Radishes.
- **Succession Planting:** Grow more than one crop in the same space over time. For example, early lettuce followed by corn, followed by winter garlic.

Tip #10: Extend Your Growing Season

Adding a few weeks to each end of your growing season can buy you enough time for another crop.

- **Tools:** Use mulches, cloches, row covers, or cold frames.
- **Warming Soil:** Preheat soil 6-8 weeks before the last frost using black plastic or IRT mulch. This gives heat-loving plants like melons and peppers a head start.



PART II: THE GROWING GUIDES

This section covers specific care instructions for 22 essential fruits and vegetables.

Section A: Vegetables & Greens

Collard Green (*Brassica oleracea var. viridis*)

- **Potting Mix:** Use 60% normal garden soil, 20% perlite or sand, and 20% compost. Mix well.
- **Germinate:** Seeds take 4–10 days to germinate. Soil temperature should be 45–80°F.
- **Container and Drainage:** Use 1-2 square feet containers with drainage holes covered by gravel. Place a saucer underneath.
- **Light:** Requires 4–5 hours of full sun for quality production.
- **Transplant:** Transplant when seedlings are 7–10cm tall, about 3-4 weeks before the last frost in spring.
- **Water:** Keep soil wet initially. After establishment, water weekly (about 1 to 1.5 inches).
- **Pruning:** Remove dead/diseased leaves. Only prune during harvest.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Aphids:* Use ladybird beetles (biological) or Sevin (chemical).
    - *Cabbage Looper:* Manual removal, row covers, Bt spray, or Neem oil.
- **Fertilizer:** Add 2-3 pounds of complete garden fertilizer (10-20-10) per 100 sq ft before planting.

Cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 3-10 days at 60°F–90°F.

- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** Minimum 6 hours daily; more is better.
- **Transplant:** Can be transplanted after 2 weeks.
- **Water:** 1-2 inches per week. Keep soil slightly moist.
- **Pruning:** Remove dead/damaged parts and older leaves to improve air circulation and light penetration.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Aphids:* Ladybird beetles or Sevin.
    - *Thrips:* Crop rotation or Admire.
    - *Alternaria Leaf Blight:* Rotate crops every 2 years; remove debris.
- **Fertilizer:** Low-nitrogen, high-potassium (e.g., 2-3-6). Apply 1 tbsp per container at planting and again at first true leaves.

Green Beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 7–14 days.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** 8–10 hours of full sunlight.
- **Transplant:** Not recommended; roots are delicate. Direct sow is best.
- **Water:** Regular watering required; average effective rainfall 0.5 - 1.5 ML/ha equivalent.
- **Pruning:** Remove growth within 6–8 inches of the base.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Whiteflies:* Dish soap mixture (2-5 tbsp soap per gallon water).
    - *Aphids:* Ladybird beetles or Sevin.

    - *Anthracnose:* Fungicide.
- **Fertilizer:** 10-20-10 fertilizer. Mix into the top 3-4 inches of soil.

Lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 2–10 days at 70°F. Keep soil wet.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** ~12 hours daily. South-facing windows are best indoors.
- **Transplant:** When plants are 2–3 inches tall.
- **Water:** Water daily for the first 2 weeks, then 2-3 times a week.
- **Pruning:** Remove dead leaves. Harvest when plant is about 10 cm tall by cutting leaves a few inches above ground.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Aphids:* Ladybird beetles or Sevin.
    - *Cabbage Looper:* Manual removal, Bt spray, or Neem oil.
- **Fertilizer:** Requires Calcium, Potassium, Magnesium. Balanced fertilizer (10-10-10 or 5-5-5) every 2 weeks.

Mustard Greens (*Brassica juncea*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 4–7 days. Ready to transplant in 2–3 weeks.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** Full sun or partial shade. Likes cool weather.
- **Transplant:** Thin seedlings or transplant 3 inches apart.

- **Water:** 5 cm (approx 2 inches) of water per week.
- **Pruning:** Remove dead/diseased leaves.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Aphids:* Ladybird beetles or Sevin.
    - *Cabbage Looper:* Bt Spray, Neem Oil, manual removal.
    - *Alternaria Leaf Spot:* Fungicide.
- **Fertilizer:** 10-20-10 fertilizer (2-3 lbs per 100 sq ft) before planting.

Onion (*Allium cepa*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 7–10 days in warm soil.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** Full sun. Partial shade results in smaller bulbs.
- **Transplant:** Late April/early May. 6 inches between plants.
- **Water:** Keep soil wet during germination. Soak 1 inch deep after establishment.
- **Pruning:** Cut green tops back to ~1.5 inches tall to force energy into the roots/bulbs.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Thrips:* Crop rotation or Admire.
    - *Downy Mildew:* Copper spray.
    - *Fusarium:* Fungicide/Fumigation.
- **Fertilizer:** Nitrogen-rich (ammonium sulfate/nitrate). Apply 21 days after planting, then every 2-3 weeks.

Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum L*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 6–8 days at 80°F. Keep soil mildly wet.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** Minimum 6 hours; 8+ hours is best.
- **Transplant:** When seedlings are 4–5 inches tall. Bury roots adequately.
- **Water:** Keep moist but not soggy. Typically twice a day in pots; 1-2 inches per week total.
- **Pruning:** Remove extra leaves, dead foliage, and suckers.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Insects:* Handpick and drown in soapy water.
    - *Oils/Soaps:* Neem oil or insecticidal soaps for aphids/mites.
    - *Sprays:* Strong water jet or Sevin if necessary.
- **Fertilizer:** Heavy feeders. Feed every two weeks. Phosphorus-rich, slow-release fertilizer. Yellow foliage usually indicates under-feeding.

Zucchini (*Cucurbita pepo*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 1–2 weeks. Optimal temp 25-35°C.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** 12–14 hours recommended (if indoor), or plenty of sun outdoor.
- **Transplant:** After 2 weeks.
- **Water:** 1–2 inches per week. Keep soil slightly moist.
- **Pruning:** Cut bigger leaves and diseased parts to improve sun exposure.
- **Pest Management:**

    - *Aphids:* Ladybird beetles or Sevin.
    - *Cucumber Beetles:* Trap crop with 'Blue Hubbard' squash.
    - *Powdery Mildew:* Fungicide (e.g., Procure).
- **Fertilizer:** Nitrogen-containing all-purpose (10-10-10).



Section B: Fruits

Apple (*Malus domestica*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.

- **Germinate:** Seeds require stratification (fridge method). Germination takes 1-2 weeks once in warm soil. *Note: Planting from seed is generally not recommended for apples; transplants are better.*
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** 8–12 hours daily.
- **Transplant:** Spring (avoid blooming time).
- **Water:** High water requirement (~125 liters for mature trees). Keep topsoil moist.
- **Pruning:** Do not prune in the first 2 years. Afterward, shorten new shoots and remove dead wood.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Leafrollers:* Bt spray or Pheromone traps.
    - *Mites:* Horticultural soap.
    - *Rust/Blight:* Specific fruit tree sprays.
- **Fertilizer:** Bone meal initially. After 21 days, use 10-10-10 fertilizer.

Banana (*Musa sapientum*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** Soak seeds 24–48 hours in warm water to break dormancy.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** 12 hours bright light. Protect from scorching heat.
- **Transplant:** Spring season.
- **Water:** High requirement.
- **Pruning:** Remove dead/diseased leaves. Only prune heavily at harvest.
- **Pest Management:**

    - *Aphids:* Vegetable oil + Dish soap spray.
    - *Panama Disease:* Quarantine and sanitation (no chemical cure).
- **Fertilizer:** Heavy feeder. Balanced 8-10-8 NPK every 30 days.

Blueberries (*Cyanococcus*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost. *Note: Blueberries love acidic soil, consider adding peat moss.*
- **Germinate:** 6–8 weeks (up to 3 months).
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** 6–8 hours. Tolerates partial shade.
- **Transplant:** Dig 10-15 inch hole; add pine bark/peat moss.
- **Water:** 25–40 mm per week. High demand during fruit sizing.
- **Pruning:** Minimal pruning first year. Afterward, remove branches older than 7 years and crossing branches.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Mites:* Horticultural soap.
    - *Cutworms:* Hand pick at night.
    - *Nematodes:* Neem oil.
- **Fertilizer:** Nitrogen in the form of ammonium (urea or ammonium sulfate).

Cherry (*Prunus avium*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** Soak seeds 24 hours. Keep moist. Thin seedlings when 5cm tall.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.

- **Light:** 8–12 hours.
- **Transplant:** Early spring after frost.
- **Water:** Deeply 2-3 times a week during the second week of transplanting, then weekly.
- **Pruning:** Prune in dormant condition.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Aphids:* Ladybird beetles or Sevin.
    - *Scale:* Buprofezin or Imidacloprid.
    - *Brown Rot:* Multi-purpose fungicide.
- **Fertilizer:** Balanced 10-10-10 if growth is slow (<20cm/year).

Grapes (*Vitis sp.*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** ~14 days (up to 2 months). Grow light recommended for 16 hours/day.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** 7–8 hours full sun.
- **Transplant:** While vines are dormant. Dig up root system carefully.
- **Water:** Thorough irrigation. Keep wet but not flooded early on; twice a week during fruit formation.
- **Pruning:** Essential for management. Leave 20–80 buds per plant depending on variety.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Mites/Aphids:* Soap + Veg oil spray every 10 days.
    - *Downy Mildew:* Copper spray.
- **Fertilizer:** Manure (poultry/cow) or Nitrogen fertilizers (urea) after blossoming.

Kiwi (*Actinidia deliciosa*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 10–14 days. Start on moist sand at 34°F.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** Full sun.
- **Transplant:** When seedlings have 2 sets of leaves.
- **Water:** High requirement. Drip irrigation works best.
- **Pruning:** Winter is best. Cut top of vine to encourage side shoots.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Leaf Rollers:* Bt or Pheromone traps.
    - *Spider Mites:* Insecticidal soap.
- **Fertilizer:** Nitrogen (Ammonium nitrate/urea) in early spring. 10-10-10 all purpose is also suggested.

Lemon (*Citrus × limon*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 7–14 days at 68–72°F in dark, warm location.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** 6–8 hours full sun.
- **Transplant:** After 4–6 months.
- **Water:** Daily for the first month, then approx. 5 gallons/week in summer for potted plants.
- **Pruning:** Never prune more than 1/3 of the tree a year. Keep height 8-10 feet.

- **Pest Management:**
    - *Whiteflies:* Soap + water spray.
    - *Greasy Spot Fungus:* Copper fungicide.
    - *Sooty Mold:* Neem oil.
- **Fertilizer:** Nitrogen fertilizer (8-8-8).

Mango (*Mangifera indica*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 1–3 weeks. Soak seed 24 hours before planting.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** Full sun (especially hot summer sun).
- **Transplant:** Easy to transplant. Ensure hole is pre-watered.
- **Water:** Daily at first, tapering to once/twice a week. Water sparingly in late winter before flowering.
- **Pruning:** Prune after harvest in early winter.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Mealy Bug:* Rubbing alcohol + dish soap spray.
    - *Thrips:* Vydate L or Admire.
    - *Anthracnose:* Fungicide.
- **Fertilizer:** High Nitrogen/Phosphorus/Potash requirement. Apply N at flowering and K after fruit setting.

Oranges (*Citrus X sinensis*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.

- **Germinate:** 7–10 days. Keep warm.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** 8–12 hours. Indoor: South-facing window.
- **Transplant:** Not recommended, but if necessary, do it at seedling stage (4-5 inches).
- **Water:** Soak thoroughly after planting. Twice weekly for first month, tapering gradually.
- **Pruning:** Not strictly needed, but helpful for containers. Shorten new shoots by half.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *White Flies:* Neem or horticultural oil.
    - *Aphids:* Veg oil + dish soap spray.
    - *Citrus Canker:* Copper spray; remove infected branches.
- **Fertilizer:** Phosphate fertilizer is crucial for new plants.

Papaya (*Carica papaya*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 2 weeks (potassium nitrate treatment helps).
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** Full sun (12 hours).
- **Transplant:** During heavy rainfall to minimize stress.
- **Water:** Plenty at early stage, then every 2 weeks. Avoid water stress to prevent flower drop.
- **Pruning:** Cut off shoots from base.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *White Flies:* Dish soap + water spray.
    - *Mealy Bug:* Rubbing alcohol + dish soap spray.

    - *Leaf Curl:* Foliar sprays (dimethoate) at sowing.
- **Fertilizer:** Every 60 days. Urea, Super phosphate, Muriate of Potash.

Peach (*Prunus persica*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** Weeks to months. Soak pit 1-2 hours then place in moist soil.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** 8–12 hours.
- **Transplant:** Winter/dormant stage.
- **Water:** Mature trees need ~35-40 gallons/day during peak summer (July/Aug).
- **Pruning:** Remove old, non-fruitful shoots. Leave 1-year-old red bearing shoots.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Oriental Fruit Moth:* Pheromone traps.
    - *Crown Gall:* Disease-free material and crop rotation.
- **Fertilizer:** Nitrogen and Potassium are key. 10-10-10 or 16-4-8 for first 3 years.

Pineapple (*Ananas comosus*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** Bundle seeds in wet paper towel. Can take up to 6 months.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** Tropical plant; needs full sun (12-14 hours indoors).
- **Transplant:** Dig hole twice as large as planting area.
- **Water:** Drought tolerant, but requires even moisture. ~2.25 cm water per week.
- **Pruning:** Do not prune. Only trim dead leaves.

- **Pest Management:**
    - *Ants:* Submerge pot in water with insecticidal soap for 20 mins.
    - *Mealybug Wilt:* Insecticides; control ants (vectors).
- **Fertilizer:** Nitrogen/Potash/Phosphoric acid/Magnesium dry fertilizer. Apply at sprouting, then every 10-15 days.

Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** Soak seeds 30 mins at 20-26°C. Sprouts in ~3 months. Keep cool/dark.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** 6–8 hours full sun.
- **Transplant:** Early spring (dormant stage).
- **Water:** Keep soil moist.
- **Pruning:** Late winter (Feb). Cut back shoots to ground level.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Sawflies:* Strong water jet or soap water.
    - *Beetles:* Pyrethrum-based sprays or traps.
- **Fertilizer:** High nitrogen or balanced 10-10-10.

Watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*)

- **Potting Mix:** 60% garden soil, 20% perlite/sand, 20% compost.
- **Germinate:** 3–10 days at 80°F.
- **Container:** 1-2 sq ft container with drainage.
- **Light:** 8–10 hours direct sunlight.

- **Transplant:** When frost danger is passed. Handle gently.
- **Water:** High requirement (16-32 gallons/week). Stop watering during ripening.
- **Pruning:** Remove irregular/rotting fruits to focus energy on healthy melons.
- **Pest Management:**
    - *Aphids:* Ladybird beetles or Sevin.
    - *Thrips:* Crop rotation or Vydate L.
    - *Powdery Mildew:* Fungicide.
- **Fertilizer:** Nitrogen-based initially; Phosphorus/Potassium once flowering begins.

CONCLUSION

With just a little investment, some patience, and a bit of work, you can harvest your own organic vegetables using your yard or containers.

Organic veggies give you higher levels of Vitamin C, antioxidants, iron, and other nutrients. They have lower levels of potentially harmful chemical residues. Your garden-ripened vegetables also don't sit on a store shelf for weeks at a time, losing valuable nutrients.

Gardening increases your food security—defined by the World Health Association as the state where "all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life."

Whether you are planting a single pot of basil or a backyard full of corn and tomatoes, the journey of organic gardening is one of the most rewarding paths you can take. Happy

growing!


A Message From The Writer - Monique StaTeena
THE HEALING GARDEN

A MESSAGE FROM THE WRITER

-Monique StaTeena

Founder & Gardener of Models Garden

"The (Healing) Garden”: Inspired by the founder’s own miraculous recovery, we utilize nature-based therapy. We teach survivors that if a garden can heal from the winter, so can they. We rebuild the soul through the soil."

Visit us at: www.ModelsGarden.com



RESOURCES

- **Gardening Tips:** Good Housekeeping
- **Planting Tips:** Nationwide Blog
- **Organic Gardening:** Pennington
- **Grow the Perfect Vegetable Garden:** Growing A Greener World
- **Community Gardening Association:** CommunityGarden.org
- **Models Garden (The 22 Growing Guides):** www.ModelsGarden.com