

YOUR GARDEN

Simple Tips For Starting Your Own Kitchen Garden

(NAPSA)—Edible gardening is growing in popularity; the National Gardening Association expects a 19 percent jump in the number of Americans growing their own grub this year. The Obama family has even joined the trend by planting the first White House kitchen garden since World War II.

There are a number of reasons growing your own fruits, vegetables and herbs is so attractive. Organically grown fruits and vegetables are more healthful, with significantly more nutrients including vitamin C, magnesium and iron. Gardening is a fun activity for the whole family, giving kids an outdoor project. It can even save you money on groceries.

Many people know these benefits but are hesitant to start an edible garden because they're worried about taking the wrong approach. The fact is, by following just a few simple steps, just about everyone can set themselves up for a successful harvest.

- **Take the high ground.** Gardens do best in the elevated parts of your yard. Lower, indented areas can trap cold air and stifle growth.

- **Break out the compass.** Edible gardens in the Northern Hemisphere should place the tallest plants on the northernmost plot. Sunlight shines from a southern angle, so smaller plants won't be left in the shade.

- **Box it up.** Use planting boxes or raised beds whenever possible, because they create soil control for drainage and maximize



Growing your own fruits and vegetables is not only increasingly popular, it may be easier than many people realize.

nutrients. Boxes also protect your roots from critters.

- **Keep a close watch.** Try not to plant your garden out of sight. If you can see the garden from your windows, it will be easier to identify when the plants are at their ripest or might need extra care.

- **Don't be a Luddite.** There's great technology out there to help beginning gardeners. For example, after 24 hours in your garden, the EasyBloom Plant Sensor reveals all the plants and vegetables that will thrive there and tells you how to care for existing plants. This handy tool takes detailed readings of sunlight, temperature, humidity and soil drainage to make expert recommendations.

Edible gardening doesn't have to be an intimidating project. With the right planning and support, millions of families will be adding fresh ingredients to their meals this year and you can, too.