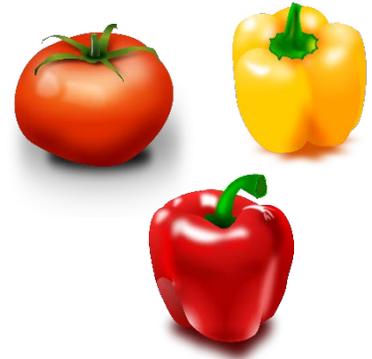


4-H +Me = Health: Container Gardening

What will we learn? 4-H members will see how easy it is to have a garden in a small space.

Why is this important? Some families do not have land space for a traditional garden. Container gardening can be a great solution for those families.



Prep time needed: Plan on 2 hours of shopping to purchase supplies.

Activity length: 10–15 minutes to illustrate the activity; 30 minutes for members to complete the activity

What will we need?

Preparation:

- Laundry basket for each member, preferably one with holes on all sides
- Weed barrier fabric
- Potting soil
- Vegetable plants like tomatoes, peppers and other smaller vegetables
- Seeds
- Tomato cage for each member if using tomatoes
- *Note: In some communities, compost may be available for use in place of or in addition to potting soil. Check with your local environmental department. This can help reduce the project's cost, and sometimes the compost is free.*

At the meeting:

- Table, 8–10 feet

What do I need to do?

Preparation:

1. Collect necessary supplies.
2. Optional: Line up a guest speaker from a local farmer's market to go along with this activity.

3. Optional: Donating the completed container gardens to a senior center or low-income housing project can make a great community service project. Check with local organizations to see if this is a good option for your community.

At the meeting:

1. Set up work stations for the members at the table with your supplies.
2. Ask if anyone in your club has planted a garden before, and allow them to share their experiences. Ask if there are any areas in your community where it might be hard to grow a garden. Explain that container gardens can be a good option for families who do not have the space for a traditional garden.
3. Demonstrate the process of creating a container garden. Start by placing weed barrier in the bottom of a laundry basket and filling the basket with potting soil and/or compost. For a small square or round basket, a tomato plant with small vegetables, such as lettuce or radishes, planted around the tomato is a good fit. For a larger rectangular basket, a combination of one or two tomatoes and peppers with smaller vegetables planted along the edge is a good choice. It is also a good idea to use a tomato cage for the tomatoes. Adding the tomato cage to the container before planting the smaller vegetables prevents the root growth from being disturbed.
4. Allow members to create their own container garden. Remind the members that during very dry weather, the basket will dry out more quickly and will require more water and attention than a traditional garden.

Summary: Gardening does not require a lot of land or space. It only requires some time and effort.

What 4-H projects does this activity connect with: Health and Gardening

Resources:

4-H Gardening project books would make a great resource.