

National Garden Month

April 2024

Non-Metro New Mexico Area Agency on Aging
Nutrition Corner



The weather is warming up, and gardening is a great excuse to be outside. Creating a garden space for your seniors has many benefits:

- * it's a fun way to stay active
- * reduces stress levels and improve mood
- * promotes social connections and interactions
- * Provides vitamin D from the sun which is essential for the immune system
- * gives a sense of purpose, responsibility, and pride
- * introduces new foods

Garden Types

Container Gardening: can be easily moved around, less weeding, less watering, may make gardening more accessible to your seniors

Raised-Bed Gardening: less erosion than ground beds, easy to manage water, fertilizer, and soil, more production than containers

In-Ground Gardening: use of existing soil, easy irrigation, much more harvest

What type of garden?

When starting a garden, there are many things to consider. First, ensure that you have the right type of location for your garden. Consider the amount of sun exposure your plants will get and/or need. In addition, your garden space should be easily accessible with paths for mobility and safety. As you consider where to place your garden, it may be helpful to know what type of garden you are envisioning. Would your seniors be happier with a vegetable garden or a flower garden? Will you have flat beds in the ground, raised planters, pots, or hanging plants? Be creative! Involve your seniors in getting started, as well as, maintaining the center's garden. Any type of garden that you choose will spruce up your environment.



Senior Center Spotlight: Tularosa Senior Center



Salsa, Anyone? There's a new salsa garden growing at the Tularosa Senior Center. Director, Anna Fresquez, and her team have created a unique space to grow all the needed ingredients including tomatoes, jalapeños, and cilantro. Their garden space is an old salad bar cart. What a great idea! Anna reached out to the community, and Lowe's generously donated all the items they needed: soil, herbs, and plants. The consumers participated in the planting and have created a Garden Club that meets during the week. The center has applied for the NM Grown grant for this fiscal year which will help support our local communities.

Growing Herbs

Herbs are a great way to add flavor to food without adding extra salt. The most commonly known herbs are basil, parsley, thyme, oregano, cilantro, rosemary, sage, and mint. But we can't forget chamomile, echinacea, and chives. There is a wide variety of herbs that are easy to grow in a little space. Most grow well in containers that drain well and need at least six hours of sunlight each day. Mint will definitely do better in a container because it spreads very quickly. The leaves or flowers can be harvested as soon as the plant has enough leaves to keep growing after you picked it. When you have a large surplus of herbs, they can be dried and sealed in a container for 2—3 years. What about spices? Spices usually come from the root, stem, seed, or bark of a tree or plant.



-[Almanac](#)

Examples of Food and Herb Pairing

Herb	Taste	Food Pairing
Basil	sweet, spicy aroma	apricots, bell peppers (red), broccoli, blueberries, carrots, corn, peaches, peas, potatoes, rice, tomatoes, white beans, zucchini
Cilantro	sweet, sour	avocado, bell pepper, coconut milk, corn, cucumber, rice, figs, yogurt, carrots, potatoes, soups, stews, root vegetables
Cumin	bitter, sweet	apples, beans, beef, chickpeas, couscous, eggplants, lentils, potatoes, rice, sauerkraut, squash, tomatoes
Ginger	sour	apples, chicken, fish, passion fruit, pears, pineapple, mango
Oregano	bitter, savory	anchovies, artichokes, beans, bell peppers, cabbage, cauliflower, corn, chicken, eggplant, eggs, fish, lamb, meat, pizza, pork potatoes, sweet peppers, squash, tomatoes, zucchini
Thyme	savory	beans, cabbage, carrots, chicken, corn, eggplant, fish, lamb, meats, onions, potatoes, soups, stews,

NEW RECIPES!

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Herbed Green Beans

Servings: 4



1 pound green beans, trimmed
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon Rosemary Leaves, finely crushed
1/2 teaspoon Thyme Leaves
1/8 teaspoon Ground Black Pepper

COVER beans with water in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 4 to 6 minutes or until tender-crisp. Drain. Return beans to saucepan.

TOSS with vinegar, oil, rosemary, thyme, and pepper.

Cook and stir over medium heat 1 to 2 minutes or until heated through.

Orange Ginger Chicken Stir Fry

Servings: 4

3/4 cup orange juice
3 tablespoons reduced sodium soy sauce
2 teaspoons Ground Ginger
1 teaspoon Garlic Powder
1/8 teaspoon Ground Red Pepper
1 pound chicken breast cut into thin strips
1 tablespoon sesame oil
5 cups cut-up vegetables, such as broccoli florets, sliced onion, sugar snap peas and red bell pepper strips
1 tablespoon honey
1 teaspoon cornstarch
1 teaspoon Sesame Seed, toasted



MIX orange juice, soy sauce, ginger, garlic powder and ground red pepper in small bowl. Reserve 1/2 of the marinade. Place chicken in large resealable plastic bag or glass dish. Add remaining marinade; turn to coat well. Refrigerate 15 minutes or longer for extra flavor.

HEAT oil in large skillet on high heat. Remove chicken from marinade. Add chicken to skillet; stir fry 3 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink. Remove chicken from skillet. Add vegetables; stir fry 3 to 5 minutes or until tender-crisp.

MIX reserved marinade with honey and cornstarch until smooth. Stir into skillet. Stirring constantly, bring to boil on medium heat and boil 1 minute. Return Chicken to skillet. Cook until heated through. Serve over hot cooked brown rice if desired. Sprinkle with sesame seed before serving.