

## Unit Leader Guide

# Gardening

*Growing food in a garden is one way to improve nutrition for children and families. Our goal as leaders is to help families grow nutritious food.*

## KEY POINTS

- **Growing food in a garden can help improve children’s nutrition.** Some children lack many important nutrients, such as those that come from fruits and vegetables. Gardening can be an inexpensive way to provide nutritious food and help prevent malnutrition.
- **There are many ways to grow food.** For example, small pots or other containers may be used where large garden spaces are not available. Where available, community gardens are also an option.
- **Parents can help children learn to enjoy eating nutrient-rich foods.** At first, children may resist eating certain healthy foods, such as fruits and dark-green leafy vegetables. Parents can help children get used to these foods by offering them regularly and preparing these foods in different ways. Children will be more likely to eat the food if they help grow it in the garden.
- **Gardening has other benefits besides nutrition.** It can help family members learn self-reliance, cooperation, and the value of work. It can also be good exercise.



**Gardening**

*Children need to eat fruits and vegetables every day. Growing some food for your family can improve your children's health.*

**HERE ARE SOME STEPS YOU CAN FOLLOW:**

- 1. LEARN HOW TO GROW FOOD SUCCESSFULLY IN YOUR AREA**
  - It helps to know the best way to grow food in your climate and type of soil.
  - Government agriculture specialists are a good resource. Local Church leaders may also suggest resources.
  - Friends, neighbors, or Church members with gardening experience may be helpful.
- 2. CHOOSE WHAT TO GROW**
  - Choose plants that grow well in your climate and soil, and in the space you have.
  - Choose foods your family will eat.
- 3. FIND A GOOD PLACE**
  - Find a sunny place. Vegetable plants need about 6 hours of sunlight a day.
  - Choose a place you can get water to.
  - You can also plant in containers such as buckets, pots, or large cans. Make sure there is a way for water to drain out.
- 4. PREPARE THE SOIL BEFORE PLANTING**
  - Dig to break up chunks of soil.
  - Add fertilizer or other materials to your soil if needed.
- 5. WATER IS KEY**
  - Make sure your plants get enough water.
  - Learn how to tell when your plants need more water.

**What is a first step you could take to grow some fruits or vegetables?**

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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## Gardening Handout

Share this handout with members of your stake and ward. It provides useful information and suggestions for families.

## Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- How common is gardening in my area? Are people in the area successfully growing fruits and vegetables?
- What spaces do members have available for growing food?
- What can we do to teach and support members who want to grow food?



### *Inspiration from the Scriptures*

*“Yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man ... ; yea for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul” (Doctrine and Covenants 59:18–19).*

## THINGS WE CAN DO

*Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.*

### Leaders

- **Teach members how to garden.** For example, hold a Relief Society, quorum, or class meeting where people can learn gardening skills. (Topics might include choosing a good location, preparing soil, choosing what to plant, choosing seeds, planting, applying fertilizer, watering and draining, and controlling weeds, insects, and diseases.) Members who have successful gardens could be invited to teach others. They could offer to visit members’ gardens and help them solve problems.
- **Look for local resources that can provide information about gardening, teach gardening skills, and provide technical support.** Find and share resources that can answer questions like these:
  - What crops grow best in my local climate and soil?
  - Where is a good place to plant?
  - What fertilizer or other materials could be added to soil to increase plant growth? (Note: It is not safe to use human feces as fertilizer.)
  - What are the available water sources for a garden? How much water do my plants need?
  - Which foods grow in a short amount of time?
- **Help arrange for community or individual garden spaces.** For those who don’t have land available, help them get information on growing in containers or small spaces.
- **Help members get basic gardening supplies and seeds.** This is especially important for families who would have difficulty getting supplies themselves. For families with special needs, consider with your council using fast offerings or humanitarian resources.
- **Invite community friends to join in.**

### Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- If you have experience gardening, teach your ministering families how to garden.
- Share garden produce and recipes with your ministering families.

LEARN MORE

Learn more about gardening and other ways to improve child nutrition: [ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

