

# HAPPINESS IS

## Scripps Miramar Seed Library



### “Grow & Share”

...harvesting vegetables  
from your own garden.

## Newsletter

JULY 23

### FOODSCAPING



More and more people are discovering that there are advantages to growing your own fruit and vegetables that go far beyond being able to go outside and pick something to eat. Home-grown produce tastes better than grocery store produce since it's freshly picked and perfectly ripe, which shines through even when cooked or preserved.

One might imagine that you would need ample space to make growing your own fruit and vegetables worthwhile, when in fact, even the tiniest sunny corner or windowsill is enough to get a good start. With a little imagination, time, and effort, you can transform almost any space, no matter how small, into a productive plot. We are talking about **foodscaping**. **Foodscaping** is a combination of “**landscaping**” and “**food**” to create an edible landscape. A foodscape is really a lens with which you can re-imagine your yard. One can grow fruit and vegetables anywhere with reasonable soil and 6-7 hours of sunlight. Having a smaller garden doesn't necessarily restrict the crops you grow; you just need to be more creative in how you use the space to fit them in. For instance, you might try to fill the vertical space on the walls and fences with trained fruit trees and bushes, or plant climbing crops, like peas, beans, and cucumbers. Vertical spaces allow growth of more crops in a smaller space. For example, fruit trees, such as apples, pears and figs, can be trained to grow against walls. Productive plants can also make

attractive additions to your flower borders. Just plug “summer gaps” with fast growing lettuce or tall, leafy corn.

It is possible to grow any fruit and vegetable in pots and containers on sunny patios, roof terraces, and balconies, as long as they are well watered and fed. Crops in containers are the ideal solution for limited growing space. Any good-size container with adequate drainage is suitable. Even window boxes and hanging baskets can provide a good crop of salads, herbs, and cherry tomatoes.

Try experimenting with crops in pots, from pears to potatoes, lettuces to lemons, and be sure to try special dwarf varieties, which suit cultivation in containers. When outdoor garden space is limited, don't overlook growing indoors on windowsills, and in glassed-in porches and sunrooms. The light and warmth found here is ideal for raising seedlings and for growing heat-loving plants, such as tomatoes, sweet peppers, chiles. Many herbs thrive on windowsills, where they are convenient for picking. Also, sunny window ledges are warm, bright and provide a convenient spot to raise young plants for extra early crops.



#### Using space

Constructing raised beds is one of the best ways of creating growing space where there was none before. Well drained, raised beds can be built on very poor or badly drained soil. Raised beds create instant growing space on any surface, especially if filled with good-quality soil



and compost. These can be very productive and if kept small, provide easy access and maintenance.

Using flower beds to grow crops is an attractive idea. Many vegetables have appealing foliage and flowers, while fruit bushes and trees bear blossoms. Perennial herbs and edible flowers are particularly suitable as border plants, but colorful salads, kale, Swiss chard can be best. They can be used by intercropping them between ornamental plants.

### Crops in containers



Containers are the best way to use space; sleek metal, rustic terracotta, or quirky reclaimed containers, such as old sinks, tin buckets and baths, can all look great. Plants can be happy anywhere, if they have good drainage. Since containers are movable, their position can be changed as per the sun or weather requirements. Even a

tiny patio has room for a few container-grown crops. They look attractive and can be moved around as required. Windowsills can easily be developed as vegetable plots. Small plants such as herbs will love the sun. Hanging baskets don't encroach on growing space and look wonderful crammed with trailing tomatoes or edible flowers.

Getting plants started in containers is initially less effort than planting in beds, but then you need to water them twice daily in the summer.

### Keep it simple



If you are just starting, keep it simple. Start with crops that are easy to cultivate and almost guaranteed to harvest. Buy transplants, so not everything has to be raised from seed. Radishes, salads, potatoes, and beans are all reliable and zucchini and tomatoes fruit all summer. Some challenging crops like melons and cauliflowers are difficult to grow and should not be attempted now.

The most important point to consider is the return that each crop will give for the amount of space it takes. Asparagus

needs a large, dedicated bed to produce a decent crop over a couple of months. On the other hand, a few rows of cut-and-come again lettuce can supply daily salads all year round. If you want freshly picked greens in midwinter, then try growing kale, one of the most resilient of all brassicas.



### Smaller plots

Where space is at a premium, grow high-yielding fruit and vegetables that get the most out of the space available. Watch for dwarf and bush varieties which are bred to take up less room and often to grow well in containers. Use pots and grow bags, fill them with attractive varieties to develop a colorful display for your garden.

### Grow up, not out

Lay out your garden plot with the fence, trellis, or wall at the north side. By planting the tallest plants there, you will avoid shading the smaller ones. Vining plants, if left to sprawl, take up valuable space in a small garden, so help them grow up. Cucumbers will eagerly climb a nylon net fence, with the subsequent bonus result being that the dangling fruits grow straighter and are easier to pick. Tomatoes produce more fruit and ripen earlier if kept off the ground on a trellis or in a wire cage. Peas and pole beans naturally reach for the sky and will cover a wire fence or twine around a tripod of poles. When looking for plants that will grow well in containers, look for terms like "compact," "tidy plant habit" or "short stature" on plant or seed pack descriptions.



### Here are a few key tips for

### Foodscaping

Use raised beds- In a raised garden bed, you keep outside weeds from your garden soil, prevent water runoff and soil compaction, and worry less about slugs, snails, and other garden pests. Also, garden boxes allow you to concentrate your energy in a small area, meaning you can work, water, weed, and fertilize as economically as possible. Keep seedlings coming with succession planting which keeps the garden in continual production. Whenever one crop is harvested, have seedlings ready to transplant in its place.

Intercrop (interplant)- "Interplanting" or "intercropping" is the practice of planting small crops in between bigger ones; the small, fast-growing crops will be ready before the big ones need the extra space.

### Smaller plots

Where space is at a premium, grow high-yielding fruit and vegetables that get the most out of every scrap of soil by cropping quickly or consistently over a long period. Watch for dwarf and bush varieties, bred to take up less room and often to grow well in containers. Use pots and grow bags and fill them with attractive varieties for a colorful display.

• **Bush tomatoes** - Great in hanging baskets, these can produce sweet cherry fruit for most of the summer.

• **Bush beans** - Many types of beans are available as bush varieties that yield heavily in a tiny space.

• **Herbs** - Both perennials and annuals deserve space for their long picking seasons and good looks.

• **Salad greens** - Cut-and-come-again salads, like arugula and Mizuna, will regrow three times in summer.

• **Blueberries** - These compact bushes thrive in pots; their berries ripen gradually for picking right through late summer.

• **Strawberries** - They look pretty in pots or at the edge of a border. Plant both Junebearers and everbearers to extend the harvest.

• **Summer radishes** - Ready to eat 6 weeks after sowing, peppery radish is perfect for filling a gap in your crops.

• **Beets** - The striking red-veined leaves look beautiful and are as good to eat as the earthy baby roots.

• **Swiss chard** - Neon-colored stems make this leafy crop a must.

• **Zucchini** - A single bush can provide more than 20 fruits, along with glorious yellow flowers.



Plant companions, not competitors- Some intercropping partners thrive if their roots occupy a different depth of soil. Pairing shallow-rooted vegetables, such as bush beans, with deeply rooted beets makes good use of space without creating root competition. Similarly, planting heavy feeders such as cabbage or cucumbers with light-feeding carrots or beans reduces the competition for soil nutrients.

### **SEED LIBRARY PLANT PICK- LETTUCE**

Lettuce was first cultivated in ancient Egypt for the production of oil from its seeds. The plant was probably selectively bred by the Egyptians into a plant grown for edible leaves. Evidence points to cultivation appearing as early as 2680 BC. This crop is perfect for beginners. It's easily



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sown by seed directly in the soil as soon as the ground can be worked. In addition, lettuce is a great leafy green because it grows quickly, produces for a long time, and is not very demanding as long as you keep the plants sufficiently watered.

Plus, lettuce grows great in raised beds, making it ideal for small spaces. It is perfect for containers and can be placed on decks, patios, balconies, and porches. It is the world's most popular salad plant. Lettuce production has become popular around the world with China responsible for more than 50% of world lettuce production. Lettuce contains substances (Zeaxanthin) that promote eye health as well as carotenoids with potential anti-diabetic actions.

### **SEED LIBRARY PICK -RECIPE- SPINACH SANDWICH**

FOR 2 Sandwiches

Spinach-1 cup (shredded)

Sundried tomatoes- 2 teaspoons

Hummus-2-3 teaspoons

Bread of your choice (sourdough tastes better)



Spread hummus on both bread pieces, put shredded spinach and sundried tomatoes on top of it. Place another bread piece on it and put it in a sandwich maker. You can add basil leaves in it too.

It's a very healthy and filling breakfast.

### **SEED LIBRARY BOOK SUGGESTION- FOODSCAPING**



Foodscaping is just what it sounds like- growing food in a landscape. It's the way to integrate edibles into traditional beds and borders, as well as finding edible replacements for what traditionally are purely ornamental shrubs, trees and perennials. Call No 634/Nardozzi

**Backyard Harvest**—This book includes all levels of expertise and variety of growing spaces-whether you have a large kitchen garden or just a small yard or balcony. Call No 635/Whittingham



### **Garden Events @ Scripps Ranch Library**

The library has several events going on this month if you are interested.

#### **Garden Share- July 15th 11-1 pm**

References: Whittingham, Jo (2011) "Backyard Harvest". Published by DK Publishing

Nardozzi, Charlie (2015) "Foodscaping" . Published by Quarto Publishing Group

Picture (few) courtesy—our Patron Sheila Rodriguez

There are multiple resources available at Scripps Ranch Library that are not cited here. We request that you share pictures of your garden and tells us about your experiences, which can be helpful for other gardeners. Also, we invite you to send in your garden related questions and we will answer them in the next newsletter.

This newsletter is composed by Ashu Agarwal and edited by Jeff Lash

For any questions, please contact Ashu Agarwal (seedlibrary@srfol.org )

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**Scripps  
Miramar  
Seed Library**

TAKE A SEED, GROW A SEED, RETURN A SEED