



STARTING A GARDEN: THE ESSENTIALS

It can be overwhelming to start your own garden. We hope with this guide, you'll find links and helpful information summarized and compiled from different resources across the web. To find more detailed information, follow the links included here or return to the Ahrens Foundation website.

If you would like to get a glimpse into what it's like to take care of a garden before starting your own, volunteering at one of the local Giving Gardens in Grinnell would be a great place to start. Please return to the website to sign up for volunteering opportunities.

1 Getting Started

Sunlight: Most plants need at least 6 hours of sunlight, so be sure the correct amount of sun will reach your plants before planting.

Soil: Things such as compost, straw, and mulch can regulate nutrient and pH levels. You can get your soil tested by following this [link](#).

Families: Certain vegetables grow better together than with others. Check [here](#) to discover more.

2 Maintaining

Water: Water at the roots in the early morning and check for moistness 1 to 2 inches below ground to monitor the water levels.

Weeding: Weeding often retains more nutrients for the plants you want. Always pull the root out to ensure they do not return. Follow [this link](#) to see some common weeds.

Tools: The handiest tools you would need are a shovel, gloves, scissors, hand rake and hose or a watering can.

3 Harvesting

When: Harvesting times are different for each vegetable. It can depend on firmness, color, or size. Read more [here](#).

How: If on a vine or thicker stem, you should use clippers to cut the produce off. Some may be able to be picked by twisting or pulling gently.

Flowering: If your plant is a vegetable plant, the vegetables will come from the flowers, so do not remove these flowers! If your plant is harvested for foliage, you need to deadhead or cut the flower off at its base so the plant can focus on growing the leaves.

Questions? Please contact Jennifer Cogley at jennifer@ahrensfamilyfoundation.org.

