

# FOOD INFLATION

GARDENING JUST MAKES SENSE



**I.M. PLANTAIN**

**Food Inflation: Gardening Just Makes Cents**  
**By**  
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## Table of Contents

[FOOD INFLATION: GARDENING JUST MAKES CENTS](#)

[THE AMERICAN FAMILY'S GROCERY BILL](#)

[U.S. INFLATION](#)

[WHY INFLATION AND WHY NOW?](#)

[FACTORS AFFECTING FOOD INFLATION](#)

[FUTURE OUTLOOK](#)

[RECENT HISTORY](#)

[HIDDEN "STEALTH" INFLATION](#)

[THE INDEPENDENCE GARDEN](#)

[A PENNY SAVED IS A PENNY EARNED](#)

[JUST GARDEN](#)

[SEEDS FOR THOUGHT](#)

[MAPS](#)

[PLANTING GUIDES](#)

[WEBSITES](#)

[COMPOST](#)

[OPEN-POLLINATED, HEIRLOOM SEEDS](#)

[NURSERY CATALOGS](#)

[BOOKS FOR GARDENING](#)

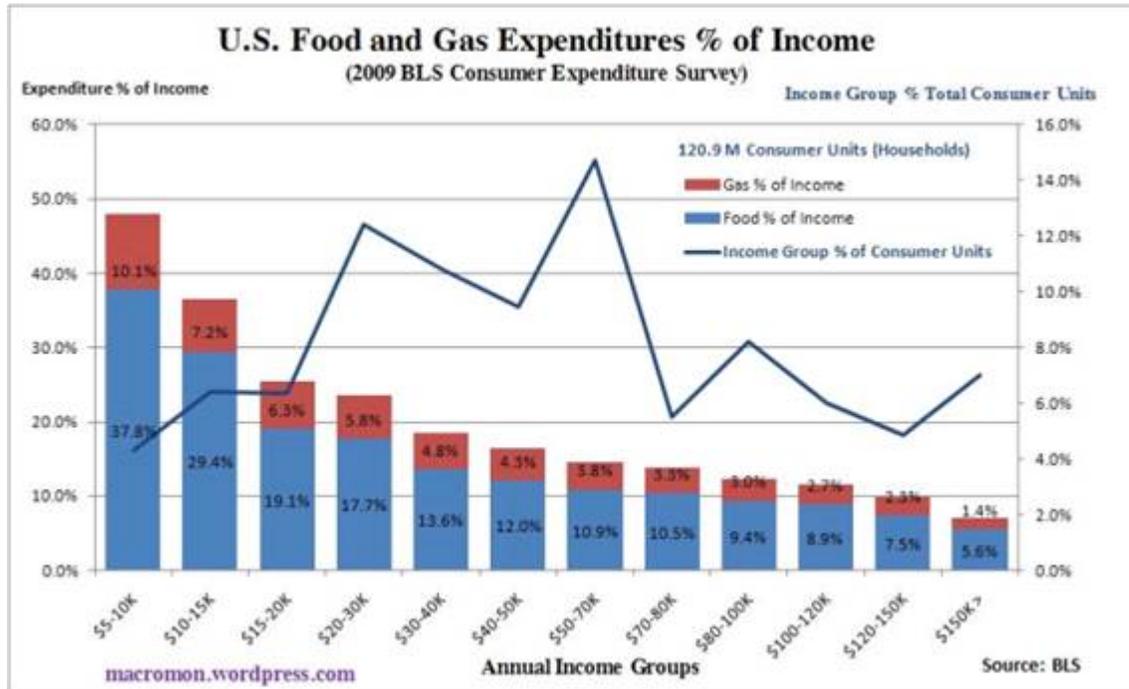
[COOKBOOKS](#)

[HELPFUL GARDEN SUPPLIES](#)



## The American Family's Grocery Bill

The American family's grocery bill ate up 6-38% of their annual income, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The lower the income, the higher the percentage of income spent on groceries. A family earning \$50,000 per year spent 10% of their income buying food (\$420/month). These days, \$400 per month does not buy much food, but represents a substantial percentage of income.



*How U.S. Income Groups Get Squeezed By Food Prices* Global Macro Monitor  
February 2, 2011

## U.S. Inflation

Unemployment rates have been persistently high. Federal regulations are exponentially increasing. These governmental regulation inhibit businesses from functioning and cost considerable time and money. These costs, of course, are passed on to consumers.

The economy is, at best, struggling. In 2010, nearly 10 million American families (12.4%) had at least one member of the family unemployed (March 2011 BLS report). Rising real unemployment (*not just the number of folks filing for unemployment benefits, but the number of actually unemployed*) and little or no economic growth causes inflation, further straining American family budgets.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, food prices in 2011 rose by 3.5% Food prices in 2012 are likely to rise by another 3.5%. In one year, the price for *Fats and Oils* increased 11%, *Beef and eggs* by 10%, *Dairy* 9%, and *Fish, Seafood, Cereal and Bakery* increased 6% (BLS). That is what the government is telling us.

Other predictions about market trends are considerably gloomier. Forecastchart.com predicts food prices will rise approximately 6% for the year ending in December 2012, but could rise as high as 9%! While individual families may not know how much our own grocery costs of risen, most of us are well aware that the grocery allowance does not go as far as it did in last year.

### Why Inflation and Why Now?

A look at past prices gives us some historical perspective about the rate and magnitude of food inflation. Karen Johnson, an economist, explains food inflation at length in her 2008 report, *Food Price Inflation, Explanation and Policy Implications*. From 1957-2003 food prices were relatively stable, rising at an annual rate of 1.6%. In 2003 food prices dramatically changed. The cost of wheat and soybeans rose by 70%. Corn rose by 55%. Rice rose by a whopping 200%! Not only did food prices rise at a higher magnitude, the elevated prices were sustained, and there was no indication of a future drop in prices.



## Factors Affecting Food Inflation

Weather conditions (*drought, flooding, hurricanes, extreme temperatures, etc.*) can have dramatic impacts on crop production. A seasonal drought can seriously impact prices for a year, but those prices tend to recover with a better crop the following year. Prolonged drought or flooding, however, can be devastating to a region, causing widespread losses that can take years, even decades, to recover. Unfortunately, in this economy, few farmers can sustain crop losses for 1 or 2 seasons.

Other factors, such as global demand for food, can have a significant impact on food inflation. Demand for food has increased in developing countries like China and India. With nearly 40% of the world population, the unusually strong economic growth in China and India has increased pressure on global food supplies. A better standard of living shifts food demands from staples (*rice*) to more expensive foods (*meats, fruits and vegetables*). While the population growth has slowed, the demand for meat has increased, and increased demands for meat increases demand for grains grown for livestock feed. According to the US Department of Agriculture, it takes 7 pounds of feed to produce 1 pound of beef (*ers.usda.gov*).

Increased demand for food is not a problem if production increases to meet demand. Stronger economic growth coupled with open trade agreements, however, decreased the pressure on individual countries to maintain large stockpiles of food staples. Recent demand increases have been met by simply withdrawing more stockpiles, thus reducing food reserves. Smaller food reserves and higher demand results in higher food prices.

When an economy weakens, investors turn to buying precious metals, rather than trusting in a paper currency. During severe economic downturns, investors turn to purchasing commodities. Agricultural commodities, such as cotton, wheat, rice, etc., have increased in popularity recently in the Futures market, and are inflating food costs to consumers.

Where previous spikes in the prices of oil and food commodities have eventually returned to their pre-spike levels, there is concern that that may not be the case this time. The annual growth rate of grain and seed oil production has slowed from 2% (1970-1990) to 1.1% (1990-2007), and is expected to decline below 1% over the next 10 years (*"Global Agricultural Supply and Demand: Factors Contributing to the Recent Increase in Food Commodity Prices"*, May 2008, Ronald Trostle, a report from the Economic Research Service, USDA).

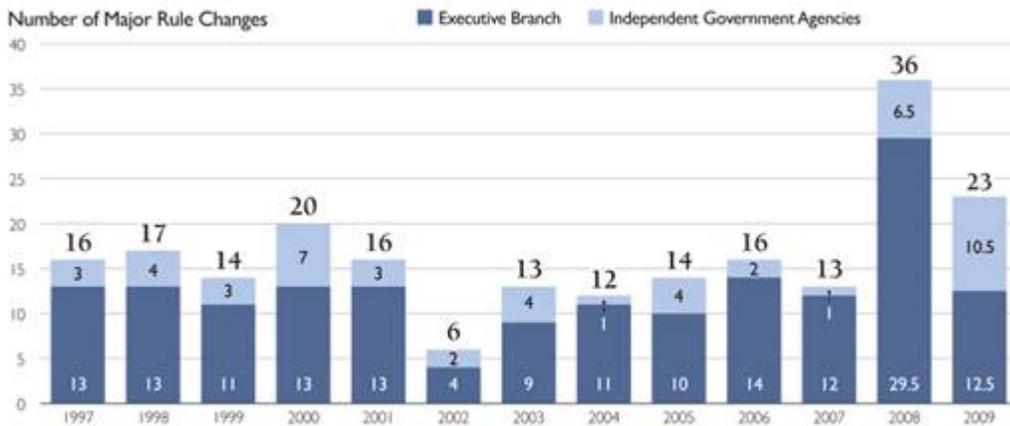
Governments have a substantial impact on food costs. Each year, new government regulations are created that add to the cost of products and services. In 2008, 36 major new regulations took effect, more than had been created in the three previous years, according to Heritage Foundation. These regulatory burdens cost billions of taxpayer dollars to implement, and have a dramatic, sustained impact on food availability and prices at local grocery stores.

The value of the U.S. currency plays a pivotal role in the inflation of food costs, and the U.S. dollar has taken a substantial hit, declining by 20% since January 2000

(TradingEconomics.com).

Governments also artificially drive up food prices by paying farmers to not grow crops, by paying farmers to grow grains for ethanol and other bio-fuels rather than for food production, and by taxing and regulating imported and exported foods. The graphs below, from The Heritage Foundation, show the number of major regulatory changes (those having an economic impact of more than \$100 million), and the cost (in billions) to implement them.

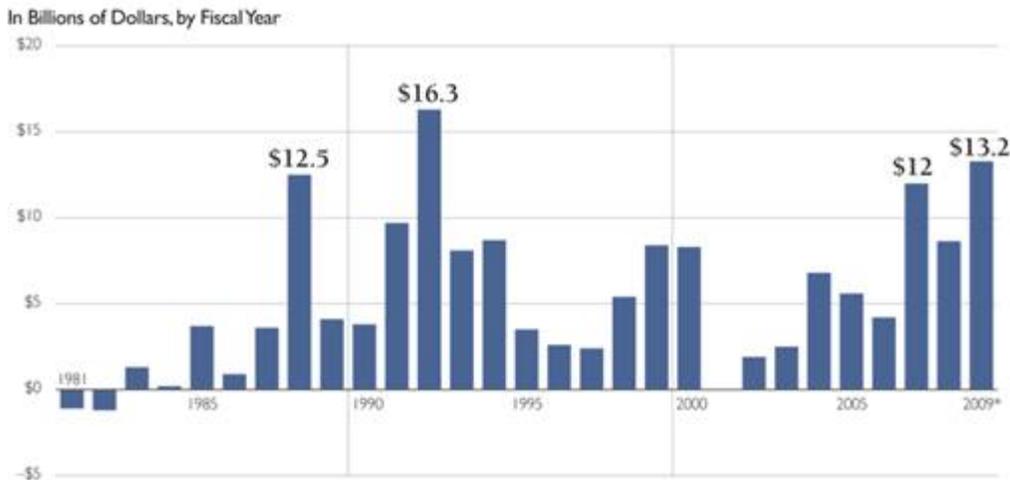
### Major Increases in Regulatory Burdens



Note: Rules proposed jointly by both independent agencies and executive branch departments and agencies are counted as 1/2 each.  
 Source: U.S. Government Accountability Office, Federal Rules Database, at <http://www.gao.gov/fedrules> (March 24, 2010).

Chart 1 • B 2394 heritage.org

### Cost of Major New Regulations

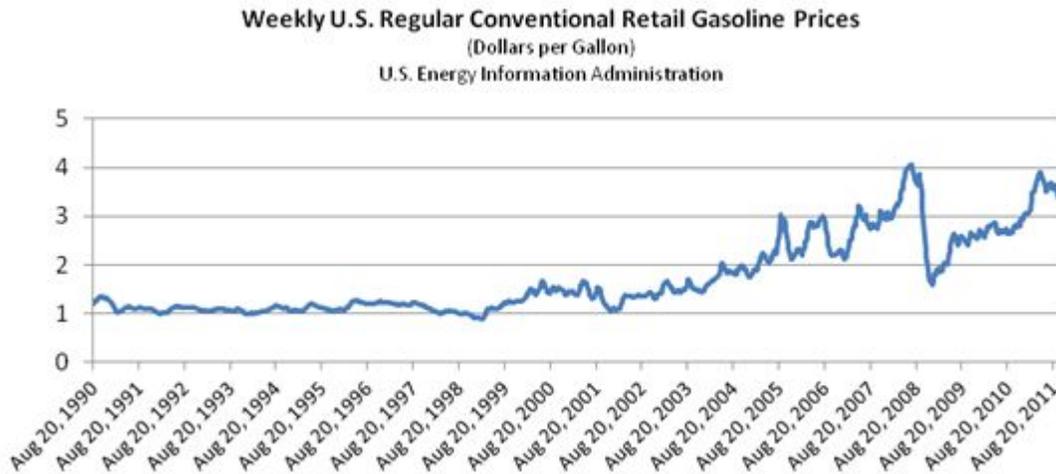


\* Heritage Foundation estimate based on reports from individual agencies.  
 Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget and Heritage Foundation calculations based on reports from individual agencies.

Chart 2 • B 2394 heritage.org

Since September 2001, crude oil and gasoline prices have skyrocketed to record highs. The cost of a gallon of gas in 2001 was around a dollar, but hit \$4 per gallon by 2008, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Higher fuel prices

result in higher transportation costs. Petroleum products are also important components for fertilizers, further driving up the costs of farming fresh produce and getting it to market.



Kevin Freeman, author of *Secret Weapon*, suggests that our current economic crisis is a concerted attack on the United States to implement its financial demise, first through an attack on energy costs (rapidly increasing oil prices). The second phase was an attack on the stock market. The third attack is destruction of U.S. currency by destroying its credit rating.

Joy Brighton, a former Wall Street trader and an expert on financial jihad, shares the concerns of deliberate attempts to destroy the U.S. financial market (*watch her lecture at the Family Research Council's website, frc.org*). Surprisingly, many large banking firms, including those bailed out with taxpayer dollars, participate in Shariah/Islamic banking programs (*JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, Citibank, MasterCard, Visa, Bank of America, AIG, Prudential, GE and others*).

Clearly, the causes of inflation are complex and multi-faceted, perhaps even malignantly manipulated. How will the current economic status impact the average American family?



### Future Outlook

The National Inflation Association is an independent group that predicts future food prices. Given the recent trends, they predict that during the decade 2011-2020 the U.S. will see a \$23 loaf of bread, an \$11 ear of corn on the cob, \$30 pound of granulated sugar, and \$46 for a half-gallon of orange juice!

Realistically, of course, few people will be unable to purchase even essential items at these costs. A weakened demand usually results in lower prices, but so much governmental influence has negatively impacted the free market system.



## Recent History

The average American family does not need a government agency to state the obvious – that grocery prices have been on the rise, and by more than just 3.5%. American families notice when the grocery bill rises. Especially when grocery prices have increased an average of 26% for the grocery staples listed in the table below. Since most families have no means of raising their debt ceiling, they have little economic choice but to buy less of everything, including food.

Many basic staples have increased by 10-60%. Pineapple juice has seen an extreme price increase of 150%. Angel food cake, not listed below, has experienced a similar increase. In one year, peanut butter increased by 29%, and continues to steadily rise. By January 2012, peanut butter purchased at Sam's Club increased to nearly \$11 for 2 40 ounce jars. That's a hefty 57% increase from November 2010 prices!

Grocery Items	Nov-10	Jul-12	Price Difference	% Change
Butter quarters, salted	\$10.98	\$7.88	\$3.10	-28%
Oil, Canola, Wesson	\$7.60	\$9.88	\$2.28	30%
Cheese, Kraft American Slices	\$7.48	\$7.98	\$0.50	7%
Cheese, Kraft Velveeta	\$9.28	\$10.87	\$1.59	17%
Coffee, Folgers Classic, 48 oz	\$9.48	\$12.48	\$3.00	32%
Cream Cheese, Philadelphia	\$6.68	\$9.98	\$3.30	49%
Cream, Heavy	\$3.34	\$3.78	\$0.44	13%
Crisco shortening	\$6.98	\$7.98	\$1.00	14%
Eggs, 3 dozen large	\$5.13	\$3.83	\$1.30	-25%
Juice, pineapple	\$0.98	\$2.48	\$1.50	153%
Mandarin Oranges, Dole	\$6.88	\$8.88	\$2.00	29%
Milk, whole	\$2.99	\$2.86	\$0.13	-4%
Paper towels, Bounty	\$18.82	\$18.98	\$0.16	1%

<b>Peanut Butter, Jif</b>	\$6.98	\$10.98	\$4.00	57%
<b>Soup, cream of mushroom</b>	\$6.12	\$9.27	\$3.15	51%
<b>Sugar, granulated, 25 lb Domino</b>	\$16.98	\$15.43	\$1.55	-9%
<b>Tomato sauce, Hunts</b>	\$6.98	\$7.68	\$0.70	10%
<b>Tuna, Starkist</b>	\$6.88	\$8.43	\$1.55	23%
<b>Nuts, pecan halves</b>	\$13.98	\$15.88	\$1.90	14%
<b>Average % Increase</b>				26%

A simple snapshot of egg prices is deceptive. Eggs appear to have decreased by 25%. Egg prices have, however, been extremely volatile, and have varied as much as \$2.08 over the same period. This represents a lowest price to highest price variation of 65%!



### Hidden “Stealth” Inflation

Manufacturers make it their business to know the prices at which they can best sell their products. In order to continue to sell products without sacrificing profits, manufacturers have resorted to camouflaging price inflation. They have reduced package sizes, the number of cans in a case, and the volume or weight of food in a package. This usually occurs in combination with new, updated appearances for packaging. Changing the shape of the package can limit a customer’s ability to detect that the package of dish detergent is now 12 ounces lighter.

Canned green beans are just one example of down-sizing while increasing prices. As late as November 2010 a case of canned green beans from a Midwest Sam’s Club used to contain twelve 14.5 ounce cans, selling for \$7.08. The cost per can was 59 cents. By February 2011 the price rose to \$7.98. This 90 cent (13%) increase per case represented a new per can price of 67 cents.

For a brief time, cases of green beans were unavailable. In June 2011 when they returned to the shelves, the cases contained only eight 14.5 ounce cans, but were selling for \$5.58. Sounds good, right? Wrong!

Each can of green beans in an eight can case, now cost 70 cents, or a 5% increase in price per can. In July 2011 the cost of green beans again rose by 6% to a cost of 74 cents per can. In total, the cost of canned green beans rose 25% from November 2010 to July 2011!



## The Independence Garden

When it comes to gardening, there are two major camps of people. Those who see gardening as a quest for the *garden of Eden*, and those who at all cost avoid the *garden of weedin*!

During these tough economic times many families have begun growing their own food, by whatever means necessary. Some by putting a traditional garden in their back yards, others by growing in pots on balconies, or by growing herbs and lettuces in their kitchen windows.

Seed prices, like groceries, have risen substantially. Ferry-Morse seeds packed for 2012 have risen 19%-39% in price at local Walmart stores. Because seeds vary in size and weight, it is sometimes helpful to compare seed prices as price per pound.

Packets of seeds sold at discount department stores are usually labeled by their weight in milligrams (mg) or grams (g). One pound is equal to 454 g, or 454,000 mg. Let's apply this to the typical seed packets bought at Walmart.

Cherry tomato seeds are very light when dried. Let's assume a packet weighs 590 mg, or 0.59 g, and contains approximately 25 seeds. That is equivalent to 0.02 ounces. You can do the math:

$$0.59 \text{ g} \times 1 \text{ pound}/454 \text{ grams} \times 16 \text{ ounces}/\text{pound}$$

If the 0.02 ounce packet costs \$1.39, the price to buy one pound is nearly \$1,112! Fortunately, there are many reputable bulk seed stores that will sell seeds by larger amounts, and for less money! Main Street Seed and Supply in Bay City, Michigan, for example, sells large fruited cherry tomato seeds for \$20 per pound! That is a price difference of \$1,092, and represents a >5000% markup!

Just a little note for perspective. In January 2012, according to CNN Money, the price of one troy ounce (31 grams) of silver was \$30.65.

$$31\text{g} \times 1 \text{ pound}/454\text{g} \times 16 \text{ ounces}/\text{pound} = 1.2 \text{ oz}$$

The equivalent price of 1.2 oz of tomato seeds would be approximately \$80! Seeds are more valuable than precious metal, and you can't eat precious metal!

Fortunately, most families do not need a pound of tomato seeds. A small packet of seeds may be fine for those who wish to enjoy fresh tomatoes during the growing season. But the family who desires to grow enough food to eat fresh and to store some away for later consumption, through either storing in a root cellar, or preserving through dehydration or canning, must buy considerably more seed, and cost matters.

For a moment, let us return to green beans. Using the packet pricing, green bean seeds would cost nearly \$11 per pound, but cost less than \$4 per pound when buying in bulk. A family would need to harvest approximately 10 pounds of green beans per person for fresh consumption, but need nearly twice that amount for preserving (U.S. Department of Agriculture's Resources Conservation Service).

There are approximately 1500 seeds per pound. The folks at Colorado State University Extension recommend planting 10 square feet of beans per person, for a yield of 10 pounds per 10 feet. By planting 2 bean seeds every 2 inches, your bean seed need will be 120 seeds per person. A family of four will need approximately 1/3 pound of beans for fresh eating, and twice that for preserving. Two-thirds of a pound of green bean seeds could cost just \$3.00 to grow enough to feed a family of four!

Del Monte claims that there are 3 ½ servings of green beans in a 14.5 ounce can that costs 74 cents. Just a guess, but the average family probably more realistically serves a half can of beans per person. The liquid counts as part of the 14.5 ounces. That means \$0.37 per serving of canned green beans, or \$1.50 per family of four.

If a serving size is a quarter pound of fresh green beans, and a family of four eats 1 pound of green beans, then 40 pounds of green beans (planted for just \$3) will provide 40 meals! An equivalent amount of canned green beans would cost 40 x \$1.50, or \$60!

Comparing fresh vegetables to canned vegetables, though, is like comparing apples to oranges!

Spinach, for example, is delicious when eaten freshly harvested, but quickly loses its delightfulness sitting in the refrigerator. It costs pennies to grow, but costs dearly to buy "fresh" at the supermarket. A single packet of spinach seeds from Park Seed costs \$1.50 and contains 400 seeds. That should reliably generate at least 300 plants. Spinach needs about 4" of room to grow in either direction. According to Colorado State University Extension, 4 square feet of spinach will yield approximately 2 pounds. If you grow your own spinach, it will take only 16 plants (32 seeds, if you double plant). The same 2 pounds worth of spinach costs approximately \$8 at Sam's Club. You do the math! A single packet of seeds can produce at least 75 plants (about 20 pounds). That much spinach would cost approximately \$80! That's more spinach for less lettuce! AND, you decide how much to plant and when to harvest!

# Fresh Produce Prices

By the Pound

Midwest Sam's Clubs, January 2012





## A Penny Saved Is A Penny Earned

Starting your own garden just makes good cents! It is still much more cost effective to grow your own food, and there are great health benefits. You can choose to grow organically, free of dangerous pesticides and herbicides. You choose the time to pick your food, usually at the peak of ripeness, so that the food not only tastes much better, it has a higher nutritional value! Gardening is also a great form of exercise and a fun way to spend time with your family.

Don't forget about fresh fruit, as well. Plant fruit trees. Depending on the size fruit tree (Standard, Semi-dwarf, or Dwarf), a single fruit tree can produce 5-20 pounds of fruit per year when fully mature! Fresh apples are currently selling for \$1-2 per pound. You could plant an apple tree for \$25, and in a couple years you could have apple harvests worth \$10-40.

Berries are an even easier way to add delicious fresh fruit to your family table! Strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, loganberries and blueberries are very easy to grow and cost far less! A 3 year old blueberry plant costs approximately \$25, depending on your locale, and will produce the first year it is planted. At maturity, 5 years, it will produce 4-10 pounds of berries, depending on the variety.

Fruit trees and berry plants often need more than one plant or variety to pollinate and to produce larger amounts of fruit.

Want to enjoy fresh nuts at home? Consider planting hazelnuts or almonds in your yard. These take less time to produce a harvest than walnut or pecan trees, and are easy to grow. Of course, if you have the space to grow pecan or walnut trees, and the patience to wait seven years for them to mature, grow your own best ever tasting pecans and walnuts! Beware of walnut trees, however. They produce a substance that inhibits the growth of many other plants.



## Just Garden

Whether you plan a garden that is large or small, simple or complex, in the ground or in pots, just start a garden! Gardening is a fun, economical way to serve your family great tasting, nutritional food. Imagine your family loving fresh carrots and broccoli because they actually have a lovely sweet flavor.

Gardening is also a great way for families to work together as a team, feel a sense of pride and accomplishment with the harvest. Best of all, you will share the rewards of a delicious bounty!

Gardens don't have to be just a hole in the ground. Plants can be worked into your landscape in a pleasing way. Blueberries, for instance, make a wonderful hedge. They have gorgeous bell shaped flowers in the spring, delightful red or orange leaves in the fall, and red twigs for winter interest.



## Seeds For Thought

Buy in bulk, when appropriate, and shop around to compare prices. There can be substantial variability in seed prices. You may also find that a single vendor does not have all the seed types that you would like to grow.

Estimate your family's realistic food needs. Then estimate the number of plants you need to grow, based on the estimated yield per plant. It's not as tough as it sounds. The trick is in knowing how many seeds are in a packet. While planting artichokes for the first time I was shocked to discover that there were only 10 seeds in the packet.

Buy 2-3 times as much seed as you think you need. I plant 2 seeds for every plant I want to grow. My own version of crop insurance, I suppose. Extra seeds can be safely stored for several years, if you keep them dry in a cool place.

Learn to compost. Compost is black gold for gardeners! It aerates soil, feeds plants, and can act as a great mulch. You can never have enough compost! It's also a great way to reduce, reuse and recycle!

Consider vermicomposting, or worm composting. Some worms can eat their weight in garbage, making them faster, more efficient composters than the compost bins.

Buy open-pollinated seeds, those that bees or insects can readily pollinate. Some hybrids are sterile and won't produce seeds. You may want to save seeds for future gardens, or sharing with neighbors and friends.



## Maps

<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html>

**USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map** *The United States National Arboretum*

This is a must-have map for determining first and last frost dates in your area. Also helpful for determining appropriate plants for your zone.



## Planting Guides

<http://www.cmg.colostate.edu/gardennotes/721.pdf>

### **Sample Planting Guide for Raised Bed Garden**

A helpful guide for estimating the number of plants needed to grow to feed a family of four.

<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/g6985>

### **Raised-Bed Gardening** *Christopher J. Starbuck, Department of Horticulture*

Discusses the advantages of raised bed gardening, types of raised beds, design ideas and soil. Great for beginners.

<http://ag.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/mg/vegetable/index.html>

### **The Vegetable Garden** *The University of Arizona for the Arizona Cooperative Extension*

This is a Master Garden Manual that discusses soil preparation, seeds, transplants, watering and irrigation, weed control, fertilizing, specific plant requirements, intensive gardening and container gardening. Bonus: They include tables with the shelf lives of various vegetable seeds and spacing guides for intensive gardening techniques.

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/Organic-Gardening/2006-12-01/10-Best-Garden-Crops-for-Beginners.aspx>

### **10 Best Garden Crops for Beginners** *Megan Phelps, Mother Earth News Dec/Jan 2006*

A straightforward article on easy plants to grow. Mother Earth News has lots of other great tips on gardening, composting, raising animals, etc.

<http://ag.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/mg/vegetable/intensive.html>

### **Intensive Spacing Guide**

This is a direct link to the intensive spacing guide section of the Master Garden Manual listed above. It also discusses the most valuable plants to grow in your garden.



## Websites

<http://www.globalbuckets.org/>

Global Buckets: Two Buckets On A Mission To Reduce Malnutrition

A great tutorial on creating “self-watering” pots that substantially limit the labor in gardening.

<http://backtoedenfilm.com/#movie>

Back to Eden

An interesting movie about Paul Gautschi’s method of growing food simply, by mimicking nature.



## Compost

<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/rrr/composting/basic.htm>

**Composting Basic information** *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

Basic information on what compost is, what to compost, and what NOT to compost.

<http://www.howtocompost.org/>

**How To Compost**

More detailed information on how to compost. Also discusses related topics like earthworms.



### **Open-Pollinated, Heirloom Seeds**

<http://sustainableseedco.com/>

#### **Sustainable Seed Co.**

Mail order company based in Round Valley, California. Sell a wide variety of heirloom seeds at reasonable prices.

[http://www.mainstreetseedandsupply.com/Bulk\\_Vegetable\\_Seeds\\_s/55.htm](http://www.mainstreetseedandsupply.com/Bulk_Vegetable_Seeds_s/55.htm)

#### **Main Street Seed and Supply**

Based in Bay City, Michigan, they sell a wide variety of heirloom seeds. They also offer bulk pricing, making the seeds very affordable.

<http://rareseeds.com/>

#### **Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds**

Based in Petaluma, California, Mansfield, Missouri and Wethersfield, Connecticut. Very nice selection of rare, heirloom seeds. A bit pricier, but they sell seeds that are hard to find elsewhere. They also have a phenomenal catalog with great pictures of the vegetables they grow!



## **Nursery Catalogs**

<http://www.starkbros.com/>

### **Stark Bros.**

Based in Louisiana, Missouri. Sell high quality fruit trees, berry plants, vegetable plants and garden tools. Provide excellent customer service. Frequently offer free shipping for orders over \$75.

<http://www.backyardberryplants.com/index.htm>

### **Backyard Berry Plants**

Based in Brown County, Indiana. Specialize in blueberry, blackberry and raspberry bushes. Website provides very helpful information for growing, soil needs, fertilizer and water needs. Excellent prices.

<http://www.truevineranch.com/>

### **True Vine Ranch**

Based in Bonner Springs, Kansas. Specialize in blueberry bushes. Excellent prices.

<http://www.totallytomato.com/>

### **Totally Tomatoes**

Great selection of just about any heirloom tomato available. They sell other seeds too, though. They also have an online vegetable garden planner.

<http://gurneys.com/Default.asp?splid=SPLID01>

### **Gurney's Seed & Nursery Co.**

Specialize in selling seeds, fruit and berry plants, fruit trees, nut trees, shade trees, bulbs, rose bushes, etc. Offer a wide variety of garden tools, plant starter supplies and season extenders. Also sell heirloom vegetable seeds. Have useful instructional videos on their website.

<http://www.henryfields.com/>

### **Henry Fields Seed & Nursery Co.**

Specialize in selling vegetable seeds and plants, fruit and berry plants, fruit and nut trees, shrubs, garden tools and plant starter supplies. Also sell heirloom vegetable seeds.

<http://www.amazon.com/>

### **Amazon**

Provides heirloom seeds from multiple vendors. Also offers seed survival kits, gardening books, garden tools, greenhouses, seed starting supplies, pots in bulk, and cold frames. Free Super Saver Shipping offered on some items.



## **Books For Gardening**

**Square Foot Gardening: A New To Garden In Less Space With Less Work** by Mel Bartholomew

*A great discussion of manageable gardening using four feet by four feet patches, or small scale intensive gardens. Everything you need to know from plant spacing to soil, bugs, and composting are explained. My first garden book! I miss his shows!*

**Grow Vegetables: Gardens – Yards – Balconies – Roof Terraces** by Alan Buckingham

*This one just sounds so practical!*

**Carrots Love Tomatoes** by Louise Riotte

*A list of vegetables, fruit, nut trees, and herbs with a discussion of which plants preferentially do well planted nearby, and which plants inhibit others. A useful book for planning raised bed gardens with square foot or intensive gardening methods. Mine is lovingly bent from years of use!*

**The Vegetable Gardener's Container Bible: How to Grow a Bounty of Food in Pots, Tubs and Other Containers** by Edward C. Smith

*A helpful discussion of creative ways to grow in small spaces just about anywhere.*

**Garden Way's Joy of Gardening** by Dick Raymond

*Specializes in the wide row gardening system, and contains a terrific mulching guide. His show inspired me to grow my own berries. Nothing beats fresh blackberries and blueberries from my own yard!*

**Worms Eat My Garbage: How to Set Up and Maintain a Worm Composting System** by Mary Appelhof

*A guide to setting up and maintaining a worm composting system that will turn your kitchen garbage into black gold for your garden!*

## Cookbooks

### **Barefoot Contessa Back to Basics: Fabulous Flavor From Simple Ingredients**

by Ina Garten

*Delicious, easy ways to use enjoy your fresh garden produce. How simple is that?*

### **Better Homes and Gardens New Cook Book** John Wiley & Sons

*A great standard cookbook. I have editions from several decades. I love the new recipes but don't want to part with the old ones.*

### **The America's Test Kitchen Family Cookbook** 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

*Great photographs and wonderful explanations. You will love their recipe for homemade vanilla ice cream on your berry pies!*

### **Bobby Flay's Grill It** by Bobby Flay, Stephanie Banyas and Sally Jackson

*With all the garden produce you will have, there will be plenty for a throw down with friends!*

### **Joy of Cooking: 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition** by Irma S. Rombauer, Marion Rombauer Becker and Ethan Becker

*This is an encyclopedia of cooking! A wonderful collection of recipes from many cultures. When I can't find a recipe anywhere else, I usually find it in this book! Light on pictures, but great on instructions!*



## Helpful Garden Supplies

**Hand tools** *Shovel, trowel, rake, dibbler*

**Pitch fork** *Useful for loosening soil and turning compost*

**Shovel** *Helpful for initial bed establishment*

**Pots** *For planting plants or starting seeds*

**Seed dispensing tool** *Very helpful for planting tiny seeds, like broccoli or celery*

**Multipurpose tool** *Indispensable for cutting string, harvesting plants, etc.*

**Seed starting trays** *Save even more money by starting your own plants for your garden*

**Plant markers** *Trust me, you will forget what you planted where!*

**Soaker hose** *Affordable way to water without wetting plant leaves, predisposing them to fungus*

**Drip irrigation tubing** *Most energy efficient way to water, but higher upfront costs*

**Tiller** *Great for loosening soil for establishing a garden, and for incorporating soil amendments*

**Composter** *Turn your kitchen trash and yard waste into black gold*

**Rain water collection system** *Rain water is better for plants, and is dirt cheap*

**Wagon or Yard Cart** *Helpful for carting heavier tools and supplies around*

**Cold frame** *Helpful for extending the growing season*

**Trellis**