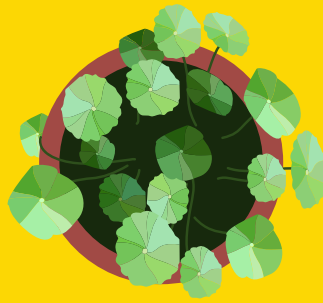




#KeepGrowing

Gardening for plant parents

Start your journey



3 Things Every New Plant Parent Needs to Know



🏠 indoors ☀️ outdoors



1

EXPLORE YOUR PLANTING OPTIONS

You're starting a plant family, which means you're probably anxious to get growing. Take a little time to figure out what you want. Do you want to grow from seed, pick up some starter plants, or do a combination of both? Open yourself up to all the possibilities, including flowers, herbs, and vegetables. The wonderful thing about becoming a plant parent is that you get to try all kinds of favourite flavours, colours, and types of plants – as well some unexpected varieties, too.



2 GIVE THEM SPACE

Healthy plants need a place to put down roots and have room to grow so make sure to choose the right size and type of container. A biodegradable pot made from wood fiber, peat, or newspaper can go right into garden soil. Other pots can be reused for new seedlings after transplanting. Either way, make sure containers have drainage holes to help plants stay moist, not soaked.



3 ENJOY PLANT PARENTHOOD

Becoming a plant parent is a lot of fun. And, if you follow the simple advice in this guide, it's easy to be successful. Like infants, starter plants or seedlings just need a warm, loving, nourishing place to grow. That means doing your best – like using premium soil that's not too wet or heavy, such as [Miracle-Gro® Seed Starting Potting Mix](#) for seedlings or [Miracle-Gro® Indoor Potting Mix](#) for starter plants.



 indoors

Starting From Seeds: How to Grow Your First Tomato Baby

Here's what to do between now and the joy of harvesting your first "I-grew-this-from-seed" tomato.

What you'll need

- Tomato seeds (**Hint:** Check the expiration date. Seeds should be <1 year old.)
- **Miracle-Gro® Seed Starting Potting Mix**
- Seed-starting pots, purchased or DIY from egg cartons, empty paper towel rolls, etc.
- Plastic wrap



Let's Begin

1

Add mix to seed pots. Be generous, leaving a little room at the top; about a fingertip's length. Firmly pack the mix without tamping down too tightly.



2

Sprinkle 2-3 seeds in each pot. Cover with a little mix. Seeds should be planted about 1/8" deep. Press down gently with your fingertips to help seeds make contact with the mix.



3

Mist with just enough water to moisten the top layer of the mix down to the seed.



4

Cover pot loosely with plastic wrap and **move pots** to a warm and cozy place.



5

Check your babies every day, making sure to moisten the mix so it's not too dry or too wet. When seeds sprout in a week or two, uncover and move to a sunny windowsill or under an indoor grow light.



#PlantParentTip: Set your baby seedlings up for success on the second part of their journey: Life outside.

- 1 to 2 weeks before you want to plant them in their permanent homes, start bringing them outdoors to acclimate.
- Place plants in a well-shaded spot for a couple of hours, then slowly build up the amount of sunlight and hours of outdoor time they receive each day.
- Be sure to bring them in each night.





indoors

Bringing Your Babies Home

You've probably spent time looking at pictures of dream homes on social media. Whether your taste is mid-century modern, industrial or traditional, there's one thing you'll want for sure to "refresh" your space: plants!

So you run to the nearest garden centre or big-box store to start your plant family from starter plants. Now you're home and realize those plant babies are not happy or thriving. You've watered and fertilized and still they seem to die.

Here are some tips for turning things around so you can become the best plant parent possible.

Consider where you live

Do you live in a basement apartment with not much natural light? Do you have floor-to-ceiling windows and plenty of sun? Plants need just the right amount of sunlight to thrive.

So, consider the lighting needs of the plant before buying. Direct or bright light means putting it in a south or southwest facing window. Medium or in-direct light requires a bright room away from the window. Low-light plants can thrive in rooms with small windows or windows that face north.



Think about the amount of effort it requires

Choose a plant that's a little more "forgiving" when it comes to care commitment.

Look for easygoing plants like these:

Cacti/Succulents: These plants ask so little and give so much.

Dracaena: Beautiful yellow, green, or tri-colour, they're practically carefree.

Golden Pothos Vine: Grows fast and long.

Peace Lily - ZZ Plant: You can forget to water this one and they don't mind much.

Snake Plant: These light-lovers can go a long time between waterings.

Spider Plant: Everyone loves these and they grow like crazy whether you love or neglect them.

Staghorn Ferns: Perfect companions in bathrooms and other high-humidity locations.

Better to keep away if you have pets:

- Pencil Cactus
- Devil's Ivy
- Heartleaf Philodendron
- Peace Lily
- ZZ Plant
- Aloe Vera
- Jade Plant
- Snake Plant
- Bird of Paradise
- English Ivy



Dracaena



Golden Pothos Vine



Snake Plant



Spider Plant



ZZ Plant



Staghorn Ferns



Cacti/Succulents



How to nurture your plants

When to water? Start with once a week. To check if a plant needs water, dip your finger into the soil. If it feels dry, water until moist, not soaking.

Are your babies in a good crib? The right pot and soil can help your plant thrive. When potting your new plant, the pot your plant came in is about the right size. As it grows, go up a size (an inch or two) every few years. Garden soil is too rich for your houseplant so consider using an enriched soil mix like **Miracle-Gro® Indoor Potting Mix**.

Should you feed? Yes, especially during the growing season. Use **Miracle-Gro® Indoor Plant Food** to help them grow strong, healthy, and beautiful.





🏠 indoors

Grow Your Own Microgreens to Enjoy a Smoothie Garden

Good as smoothies are, here's how to make them better: Grow your own power-packed microgreens. Unlike sprouts that are eaten "root to shoot," microgreens are the tiny versions of full-grown leafy greens, vegetables, and herbs.

WHY GROW MICROGREENS?

They're fun, fast, and easy to grow indoors. Not to mention you can enjoy these tender little babies in about 2 weeks.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Seeds like cabbage, kale, or wheatgrass, along with [Miracle-Gro® Seed Starting Potting Mix](#) will give your young-uns a healthy start. You'll also need a water-filled misting bottle, a disposable carry-out container or aluminum pie plate, and plastic wrap.



HOW-TO

- 1** Spread 1" of seed starting mix in the bottom of the container, carefully smoothing it into an even layer without compacting it.
- 2** Sprinkle the seeds evenly over the mix. Gently press seeds into the mix. **Hint:** A small piece of cardboard can help cover seeds without squishing soil.
- 3** Lightly water, being mindful to barely dampen the surface.
- 4** Cover with plastic wrap and place in a sunny window. Since these babies need at least 4 hours of sun each and every day, give them a boost with a grow light if you need to.
- 5** Keep soil moist with a daily spritz of water until sprouts appear. Be patient. It can take a few days to a full week for seedlings to appear. Seeing sprouts? Yay! Remove the cover and continue misting daily.



#PlantParentTip: Harvest when plants are 3" tall.

Berry-Banana Microgreen Smoothie

Whirl together in a high-powered blender:

- 1 cup almond or other milk
- 1/2 a frozen banana
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen berries
- 1 handful fresh or frozen spinach
- 1/4 cup freshly harvested microgreens from your garden
- Splash of vanilla extract
- Maple syrup, monk fruit, or stevia to taste (optional)



Pot or Not? DO's and DON'Ts for New Houseplants



Even if your baby houseplant comes with instructions, you may not know if – or when – to pot it. No worries. We've got you covered.

Do's

DO let your plant get used to its new environment. Find a lovely little spot where you think it will thrive.

DO water and feed on a schedule. Follow the recommended guidelines for your plant. Most plants like to stay moderately hydrated and well fed.

DO remember to also re-pot when plants are 2-3 times the size of their pot or growing slower than they should.

Don'ts

DON'T repot too soon. Plants need about two weeks to acclimate, so leave it in its growing pot for a little after bringing it home.

DON'T let it get root bound. Roots growing through drainage holes or all tangled up and pushing the plant out of its pot are sure signs that the plant needs room. Time to re-pot.

DON'T forget to check for dryness. Plant babies thrive in high-quality potting mix, but potting mix dries out quicker than plain old soil. So, do a quick finger dip into the mix. If it's dry, moisten a little. If it's wet, let it be.

The Pot Perfectly Toolkit

The best way to pot a houseplant.

- **Miracle-Gro® Potting Mix**
- Pot, planter, or container (one with drainage holes is best)



1 REMOVE PLANT
Gently wiggle the plant out of its grow pot.

2 GET RID OF EXCESS POTTING SOIL
Use your hand to remove about a third of the surrounding potting mix.

3 LOOSEN ROOTS
Using your fingers, carefully separate plant roots then set the plant aside.

4 FILL PLANTER WITH POTTING MIX
If using clay or rocks, place them in the bottom of the planter. Add a layer of fresh potting mix, pressing down to remove spaces, gaps, and air pockets.

5 RE-POT YOUR PLANT
Place plant into container, holding onto it while adding more potting mix. Press down on the potting mix to make it firm and dense, not compacted. Add more mix as needed. Now feed and water. You've just made your plant baby very happy.



Let us walk you through the how-to



#PlantParentTip: Plants love a fresh dose of potting mix, so re-pot every year right before the warm-weather growing season.

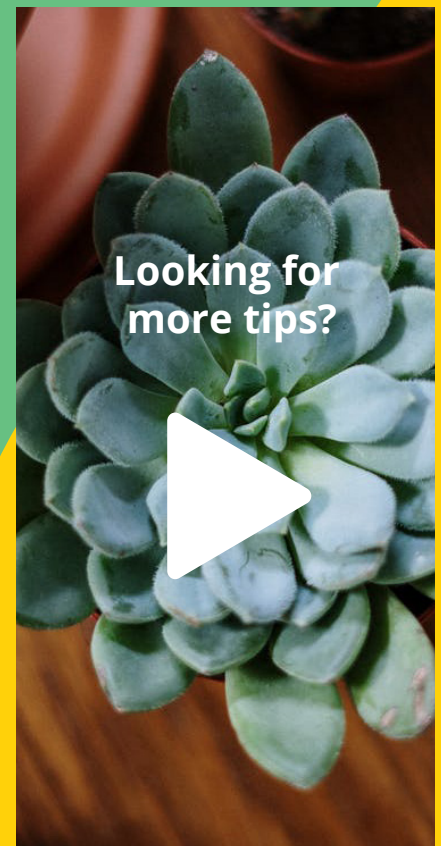


🏠 indoors

Caring for Succulents: A Newbies' Guide

Your journey as a parent to prickly plants like cactus, aloe vera, and snake plant starts with these fundamentals.

- 1 USE A QUALITY MIX:** Cacti pretty much all like the same thing: light, airy, quick-draining soil. Since not just any dirt will do, succulent owners often buy a variety of soils and amendments and mix their own. Skip the hassle and use Miracle-Gro® Cactus, Palm & Succulent Potting Mix.
- 2 WATER CORRECTLY:** Cacti are terrific at storing moisture for dry times. That doesn't mean they don't need watering now and then – they do. You'll know it, too, if your plant starts to yellow. Also, be sure to water during the plant's growing season.
- 3 FEED WELL:** Like all living things, succulents need plenty of right-for-them nutrients; especially during the warmer months when they're growing. Help cacti thrive by giving them an instant-feed, low-nitrogen fertilizer like Miracle-Gro® Indoor Plant Food.
- 4 ENSURE SUNLIGHT:** Your desert-loving darlings need at least 4 hours of direct sunlight a day. Tropical succulents, like Christmas cactus, however, prefer partial shade. Move them to a sunny spot when you want to accelerate growth.





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Easy Container Growing

It's easy to grow lots of plants, including vegetables, in containers. Baskets, buckets, boxes, and barrels ... your options are wide open.

With container gardening, you can grow anything and everything. Vegetables, flowers, herbs, shrubs, trees, or all of them together. A filled planter can get too heavy to move, so decide where your container garden will go and move it there.

Now that you're ready to plant, here are some herb and vegetable container gardens that are easy to grow - and tasty, too.



Salad Garden: Lettuces, cherry tomatoes, herbs



Pizza Garden: Basil, oregano, tomatoes, peppers

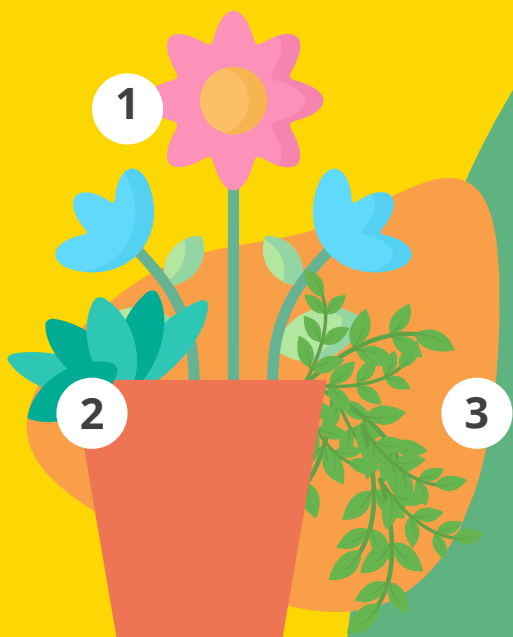


Perennial Herbs: Mint, lemon balm & oregano





Coolest container combos



In comedy, it's the rule of three. In sports, it's a triple threat. In gardening, it's thriller, filler, and spiller. "It" is the wow factor and getting it in your container garden is as easy as 1-2-3.

1. THRILLER

Tall, bold, beautiful, show-stoppers
These are the focal point.

2. FILLER

Colourful, mid-sized, rounded
Complements the star player.

3. SPILLER

Trailing, cascading, overhanging
Softens and completes the look.

Choose 5-6 plants for an 18- to 24-inch container.



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How to Nurture a Container Garden

All container gardens need a little tender, loving care. Container plants need an airy soil that lets them spread their roots. (Plain soil is too dense.) That means using something that promotes good drainage and proper air flow like **Miracle-Gro® Potting Mix**.

Before planting, be sure to wet the potting mix well. To do so, pour several rounds of water into the mix and stir, making sure it's moist all the way through. Now, add your plant and top with more mix, leaving a little room at the top for watering.

Before planting, trim any circling roots, then plant to about the same depth as the grow pot. Water often, making sure the mix doesn't completely dry out.



Giving your plant babies the right nutrition

Plant food is often the missing ingredient to a thriving garden. Plants pull nutrients from the soil to grow and those nutrients need to be replenished.

Using a slow release fertilizer on its own is a great, low fuss option. It provides a small amount of food for a long period of time – up to 3 months. Water soluble plant food provides excellent results, too, but is more high maintenance. It provides a lot of nutrients instantly, and delivers the best results for your garden when used every 7-14 days.

For those who want excellent results but can't keep up with feeding that frequently, here's a tip: use a bit of both. Put down **Miracle-Gro® Shake 'n Feed®** at the beginning of the season and after the first month, and boost your garden with **Miracle-Gro® Water Soluble Plant Food** when you remember throughout the season.



Get the most out of your containers



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Bringing Up Baby: Raised Bed-Style

You can also raise herb, veggie, or flower babies with the help of a raised garden bed, which is kind of like a crib. It's a high-sitting bed that makes the most of a small space while keeping your babies self-contained.

- **Loose, fluffy soil.** Unlike in-ground soil, raised beds can be mixed and filled with soil that meets plant needs and gives them room to move.

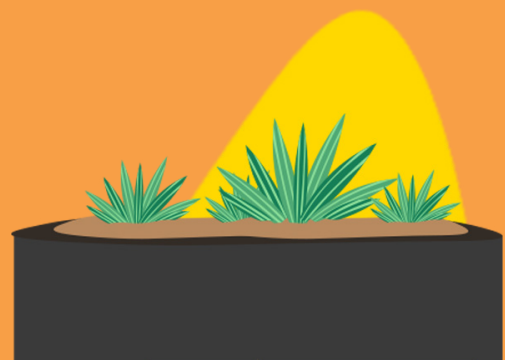
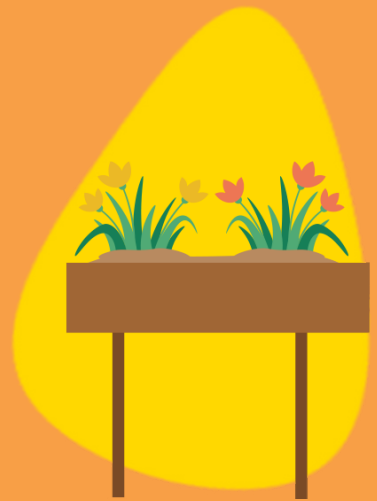
- **(Almost) weed- and pest-free gardening.** Raised beds are usually planted pretty tightly, so healthy plants crowd out pretty much all the weeds. As for random pop ups, they're easy to pluck by hand. Pests are less of a problem, too, since a smaller bed makes it easier to monitor and manage insect issues.

- **Choices!** Given the right conditions, you can grow just about anything in a raised bed, so let your imagination – and taste – guide you.

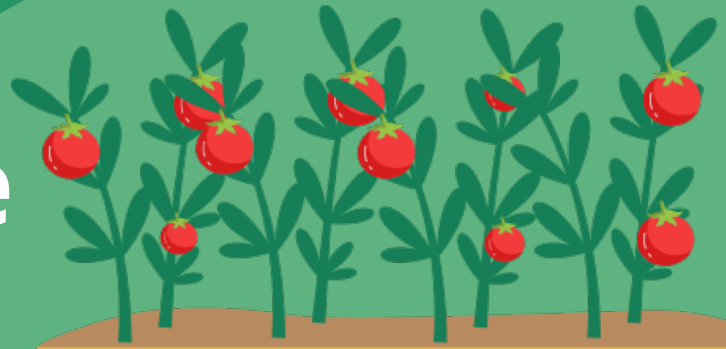
Moisture-loving plants

Mediterranean herbs

Succulents

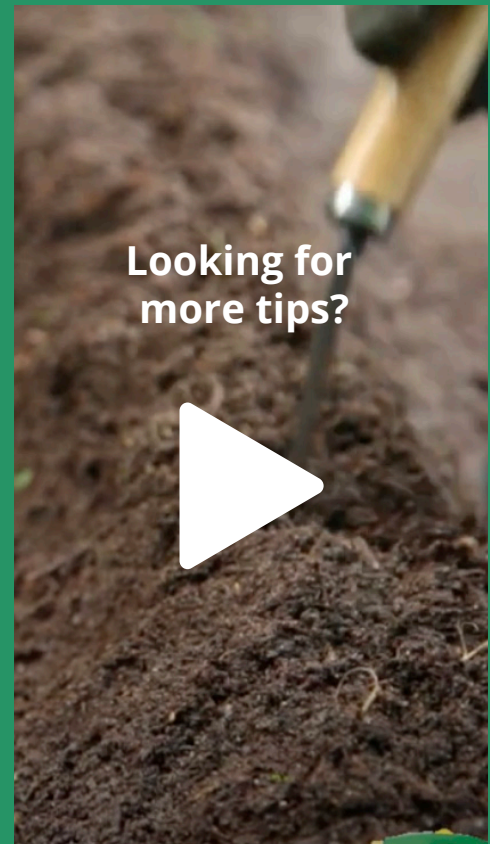


How to Create a Raised-Bed Vegetable Garden in 4 Easy Steps



Here's your step-by-step guide for plotting out and putting in a raised vegetable garden filled with all kinds of good eats.

- 1** Pick a sunny location. Vegetables are sun worshippers with most needing full sun for the better part of the day.
- 2** Add good, quality soil to your raised bed. A specially formulated soil enriched with continuous release plant food like **Miracle-Gro® Garden Soil All Purpose** improves existing soil so plants can build strong roots.
- 3** Fill your raised bed with a bounty of your favorites for cooking and eating. Home chefs may want onions, peppers, carrots, and herbs while salad lovers may want lettuces, cherry tomatoes, and cucumbers.
- 4** Water and feed. Water as needed, usually a couple of times a week, depending on weather. When possible, let rain do the watering for you. Feed regularly with **Miracle-Gro® Water Soluble Tomato, Fruit & Vegetable Plant Food**.



Looking for more tips?





 outdoors

In-Ground Tomatoes for First-Time Plant Parents

1

Start plants from seed or purchase starter plants 4-6 weeks after the last frost. Make sure planting holes are 2X the size and depth of the root ball.

2

Toss a handful of **Miracle-Gro® Garden Soil All Purpose** into each hole before planting to improve native soil. When planting, remove lower leaves and bury part of the stem, leaving a couple of sets of leaves above-ground.

3

Stake or cage plants to help support the weight of the fruit as plants grow. Sucker plants by pinching off extra side shoots for bigger, better fruit.

4

Tomato plants have big appetites and need a steady supply of plant food to grow their best. **Miracle-Gro® Shake 'n Feed® Tomato, Fruits & Vegetables Plant Food** feeds both your plants and the beneficial microbes in the soil (which help plants take up all the nutrition they need) for up to 6 weeks.

5

Water plants every day until they're growing really good, then water as needed to keep soil moist. Pick and discard any tomatoes ravaged by bugs.



#PlantParentTip: Help prevent rot and fungus by taking off bottom leaves up to about 12" on 3' plants.

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Plant Doctor Tips: Keep Your Plants Healthy



Nobody wants a sick plant. Here's how to keep critters, creatures, and common diseases from disrupting plant babies' happy lives.

INSECTS

Chew holes, slimy gunk, curling and dropping leaves are signs of garden pests. Some of the most common invaders include aphids, spider mites, thrips, soft brown scale, mealy bugs, and white flies.

The Remedy: To stop bug problems, apply [Ortho® Bug B Gon® Eco Insecticidal Soap](#) as soon as you see bugs. Re-apply after 7 days.

ANIMALS

If rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks, or deer have been through your garden like an all-you-can-eat buffet, do something to deter them.

The Remedy: Treat your prized petals and plant leaves with [Ortho® Animal B Gon™ Max Animal Repellent](#). It makes just a few bites of your plants taste bad to animals, forcing them to find food elsewhere.





SLUGS & SNAILS

Seeing holes in plant leaves is a sign that you should take a closer look. Likely culprits are slugs and snails.

The Remedy: Slugs and snails love a wet, dark garden, so dry things out a bit by watering in the morning instead of at night. For a big slug problem, use [Ortho® Slug B Gon® Eco Slug and Snail Bait](#). It's the easy and effective way to stop slugs and snails from decimating your plants.



BLOSSOM END ROT

Tomato and pepper plants with blackened or scarred bottoms usually mean one thing: blossom end rot. Erratic weather and insufficient watering can cause this disease, but the #1 cause is lack of calcium in the soil, which can also cause problems like fruit cracking.

The Remedy: Nourish plants with a calcium-enriched fertilizer like [Miracle-Gro® Shake 'n Feed® Tomato, Fruit & Vegetable plant food](#).



#PlantParentTip: For more remedies and treatments, watch this:



YOU DID IT!

Share your knowledge
and plant babies



#PlantParentLife #KeepGrowing

Ingenious ideas for – and from – plant parents.

Got a nifty growing hack, hint, or idea? Share yours
with us@ScottsMiracleGroCanada

