

GROW YOUR OWN PIZZA GARDEN

Many ingredients in pizza come from the garden. Tomatoes, basil, oregano, sweet bell peppers and onions are just a few of the vegetables that you might find on your slice of pizza. These are vegetables commonly used to make pizza and spaghetti sauce. Other vegetables such as spinach and hot peppers are sometimes added as toppings. It can be fun to grow your own ingredients to make a fresh, homemade pizza. You and your family will enjoy tasting the fresh ingredients that you were able to raise for yourself. You will not believe how good it tastes!

Getting Started

1. A back yard garden area is a great site for your pizza garden. Make sure you have loose and well-drained soil and that the garden is located where it will receive at least 6-8 hours of sun. If you have limited space, select one large or several smaller containers for the plants that you will be growing. Make sure that they are deep enough to let all of the roots grow. A clean recycled 5-gallon bucket is ideal for large plants like tomatoes. Clean the container thoroughly before you begin.
2. Make sure that your container has holes in the bottom. If it doesn't, you must drill or cut drainage holes in the bottom of the container. Young gardeners should seek help from an adult.
3. Fill the container with enough soil to reach to about 1 inch below the top of the container.
4. Moisten the potting soil with a little water to make it easier to work once it is in the pot. It takes time for dry soil to get wet.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 🌱 A garden or large container at least 5 gallons in size with holes drilled in the bottom.
- 🌱 Enough potting soil to fill the container
- 🌱 A few of your favorite plants from the following:
 - 🌱 Tomato
 - 🌱 Bell Pepper
 - 🌱 Basil
 - 🌱 Oregano
 - 🌱 Onions (from sets or seeds)
- 🌱 A sunny location for your potted pizza garden when you are finished.



FRESH TOMATO PIZZA SAUCE

This sauce will take a little while to make, but the results are delicious. This makes enough for your family to freeze or preserve some for future use.

INGREDIENTS

$\frac{1}{3}$ c. olive oil
2 c. finely chopped onions
8 c. peeled, seeded, coarsely chopped tomatoes (put through blender, if desired)
2 (6 oz.) cans tomato paste
2 tbsp. oregano, crumbled
2 tsp. basil, crumbled
1 bay leaf
2 tbsp. sugar
1 tbsp. salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. pepper
2 tbsp. finely chopped garlic

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat oil in large stainless steel pan, 6 to 8 quarts. Add onions and cook over medium heat for 6 to 8 minutes until transparent. Add garlic and cook another minute. Stir in tomatoes, paste, oregano, basil, bay leaf, salt, pepper and bring to a boil. Then simmer, uncovered for an hour or until thick. Stir occasionally. When finished, the sauce should be thin and fairly smooth. Remove bay leaf. Taste and season. May be canned or frozen. 5 to 6 pints.

From: <http://www.cooks.com>

Planting Your Garden

1. Tomatoes and peppers are best set out as transplants after April 15. You can grow your own or buy healthy plants from local garden centers.
2. If using a container, plant tomato or pepper in the middle of the container. Make sure the hole in the soil is big enough for the plant's roots. Plant the basil, oregano and onions around the tomato or pepper plants about 3 inches from the edge of the container. Backfill and firm the soil gently around the plants.
3. Water the plants well to make sure they feel welcome in their new homes.

Caring For Your Garden

1. Keep your container in a location that receives between 6 and 8 hours of full sun each day.
2. Make sure that the garden is watered. For containers, check the soil every day. The soil should dry out slightly before you water again. You will probably need to water your container a few times per week.
3. Keep an eye out for insects and other problems. If insects start eating your plants, get assistance for proper identification and best control measure.

Harvesting Your Ingredients

1. Pull tomatoes and peppers off of the plant firmly.
2. Remove only the leaves of the basil and oregano.
3. Pull onions up from the soil. The longer they stay in the soil, the bigger they get. Wash the onion bulbs and slice as needed. You can also use the green parts when the onions are young.