

# GROW YOUR OWN TACO GARDEN

Tacos are a great meal that can be made healthy and fresh with the addition of fresh veggies from the garden. Many of the ingredients of a taco are common and easy to grow. This garden should be started in late spring or early summer for best results.

## Getting Started

1. A back yard garden area is a great site for your taco 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 with this step.
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.

## 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. Make a hole in the soil big enough for the plant's roots. Backfill and firm the soil gently around the plants.
3. Water the plants well to make sure they feel welcome in their new homes.
4. Cilantro and lettuce are cool weather plants that grow best from seed sown in mid-March. You can use seeds or bulb "sets" for your onions. Follow package directions for seeds.



## 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
- 🌱 Seeds or seedlings for a few of your favorite plants from the following:
  - 🌱 Tomatoes
  - 🌱 Jalapeño Peppers
  - 🌱 Bell Peppers
  - 🌱 Cilantro
  - 🌱 Lettuce
  - 🌱 Onions
- 🌱 A sunny location for your garden



## SIMPLE HOMEMADE SALSA

Toss together fresh veggies from your taco garden and serve with tacos.

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup fresh tomatoes, diced  
½ cup corn kernels, fresh or frozen  
½ cup onion, diced  
1 Tablespoon (or less) jalapeno peppers, chopped  
2 Tablespoons lime juice  
2 cloves fresh garlic, finely diced

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine all the ingredients.
2. Serve with low-fat baked tortilla chips, fresh vegetables or tasty tacos.

### NUTRITION INFORMATION:

Calories: 33  
Carbohydrate: 8 gm  
Fat: 0.4 gm  
Saturated fat: 0 gm  
Cholesterol: 0 mg  
Sodium: 26 mg  
Vitamin A



## Caring For Your Garden

1. Keep your containers 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 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. Harvest tomatoes when they are ripe. Peppers are ready to pick when they are large enough to be used.
2. Remove only the outer leaves of the lettuce, leaving the plants in place. New leaves will grow back for another harvest.
3. Cilantro and lettuce may “bolt” (go to seed) when weather gets hot, which means they are past their peak.
4. Snip the tops of onions to use as green onions on your tacos. If you let the plant stay in the soil, the bulb will get big to use in salsa.

## Try Something Different

- ☼ If you are able to find seeds for cumin, a common spice used in taco seasoning, give it a try! It takes a long growing season, so start transplants inside during the winter.
- ☼ Try incorporating different fruits and veggies into the salsa for your tacos. Peach or pineapple salsa is a tasty treat.