

# New Gardener Considerations

The City of Eugene Community Garden Program supplies space, water and a small selection of tools including shovels, hard rakes, leaf rakes, digging forks, pitch forks, scuffle hoes, grubbing hoes and wheelbarrows. Small hand tools, soil amendments and seeds are not supplied. Before committing to a garden plot, consider the following tools and expenses:

- **Seeds:** do you plan to begin your plants from seed? If so, you will also need potting soil and containers. There is [a seed library at Eugene Library](#) that offers free seeds. Buying plant starts is another good option that promises healthy plants. If you have food stamps, some local farmers markets have [a Double Up Food Bucks \(DUFEB\)](#) program that qualifies for plant starts as well.
- **Irrigation and watering supplies:** Hoses or watering cans are not supplied. Do you plan to hand water your garden, or does an automated timer fit better into your schedule? The most conservative way to water your garden is with drip irrigation, think about which method best fits your values and budget. Overhead sprinkles are discouraged at the gardens, as they are hard to keep within plot boundaries and can negatively impact neighboring plots.
- **Compost and Soil Amendments:** These are not always necessary for gardening, but often different plants require different nutrients. Soil can also become depleted after growing heavy feeding crops. Consider the costs of adding all-purpose fertilizer, or more specified amendments as you garden. Cover crops are an additional cost that you may want to consider to improve soil health, especially in winter months when most crops do not grow. Leaves are provided to all gardens at the end of Fall for winterizing your plot.
- **Pest Deterrents:** There are many methods from keeping pests from your crops, including netting and flashers to keep birds away from berries, insect netting to prevent cabbage moths to getting to your brassicas, and neem oil or insecticidal soaps to keep back small pests like aphids and squash bugs. **Only certified organic products can be used** and insecticides are not allowed.
- **Season Extension:** If you are wanting to get a jump on the season, or extend into colder months, products such as row cover can be bought to keep your crops warm in the threat of frosts. Depending on the weather, these can double as a pest protection as long as your crops don't get too hot.

### Other Cost and Purchase Considerations:

- Gloves
- Sun Hat and Sun protection
- Hand Trowel
- Hand Rake
- Hand Hoe
- Hori-Hori
- Hand Pruner or Scissors
- Kneeling Pad
- Rubber Boots



### How much time and space do I need for my garden?

Plants require regular care, so be realistic about how much time you'll be willing to spend weeding, watering, and so on. Start small and scale up from there.

Plan on budgeting at least 2 hours a week to spend on your garden, with projects ranging from weeding, watering, planting, pest management, mulching, trellising, and general maintenance. Keep in mind your other time commitments you typically have throughout the year as well.

A half plot (about 200-300 sq feet) is an appropriate size for a beginning gardener who wants to try a few different crops and eat consistently from the yard during the peak harvest seasons. 1-2 hours a week will likely be enough to keep up with all garden tasks.

A full plot (about 400 square feet) is a good size for an intermediate gardener with ample time to garden, or advanced gardener with a hectic schedule. Expect to spend 2-4 hours a week in the garden for upkeep, harvesting, and processing of crops.

### What types of plants are you most excited to grow, what do you most like to cook and eat?

Many people want to see their salad sprout from the ground. Others may be more interested in fresh tomatoes. Know your motive, and it'll guide the rest. There's no reason to grow a 5-pound zucchini if you don't love the stuff. Grow things that are yummy to you.