

Conservation Corner

Spring is almost upon us and now is a great time to consider starting a garden. Not only would starting a garden be a great activity for you and your family, but it is a great way to help the environment as well. Gardening is a common practice from human history, it has only been more recently that people have tended to go to stores to purchase their fruits and vegetables.

While many of us don't have enough space for a garden to supply all of our food needs, our backyards are a terrific place to supplement our groceries by growing some of our own food. Not only is this rewarding, it can serve to help save us money as well.

You don't need a lot of space to start a garden, but it should be in a location that gets an appropriate amount of sun for the crop you will be planting. You can use your garden as an opportunity to remove turf, which relatively requires a lot of water compared to other plants, and also pick a low area to serve as a rain garden to help reduce the amount of precipitation runoff from your property. Instead of planning a large variety of plants you can work with your neighbors to each plant a different crop, and each can share in the harvest. Often, when tomatoes, or zucchini, or peppers come in, they grow faster than a family can consume their fresh pick. Sharing with neighbors is a great way to ensure your bounty does not go to waste.

Be certain to pick fruits and vegetables that grow well in this climate and do not require significant amounts of water, or fertilizer. Your garden may be attractive to rabbits, deer, and other wildlife. Keep this in mind as you start your garden and be certain to protect your new plants, if you do not want to share them with nature.

Consider your plants well, and choose items you like, are easy to grow, and will supplement your groceries. Local food does not need to be transported as far, and cuts down on the amount of food miles that imported food causes. To supplement your garden, be sure to visit the La Plata Farmer's Market in season to take advantage of local fruits and vegetables. When shopping in the grocery store, choose fruits and vegetables that are in season to avoid food that has been transported long distances. The closer to home your food comes from; the better it will be for our whole environment.

Also, if you are considering adding trees to your property, try fruit or nut bearing trees. You will get the double benefit of the tree and a convenient source of food as well.