



BETTER LIVING
FOR TEXANS
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

BETTER LIVING for *Texans*

Committed to serving Texans and to improving lives

Spring 2018
Victoria County

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Get Your Daily Fruits and Vegetables with Container Gardening

One of the best ways to make sure you are getting enough fruits and vegetables in your diet is to grow them yourself so that it is handy and less costly.

If you think that you can't grow your own fresh, healthy vegetables because you don't have a yard or because you have mobility issues, think again! Container Gardening is the answer!

Here is a brief, step-by-step guide to starting your own container garden:

1. Choose what you would like to grow— tomatoes, carrots, beets, kale, peppers, eggplant, green onions, okra, beans, lettuce, squash, radishes, and parsley are good container crops, but read each seed packet to see when they should be planted in our area and how much moisture and light each one needs.
2. Use potting mix instead of potting soil— potting mix is free of disease and weed seeds, holds moisture and nutrients, drains well, and is lightweight.
3. Decide on a container— almost any container will work, as long as it can drain out water and is large enough for your plant. Examples of great containers are a milk jug with holes poked through the bottom for drainage, the bag your potting mix came in, an old shoe, or a small trash can. If you have mobility issues, you may want to choose a container that is smaller and more portable or buy a plant stand with wheels on the bottom of it.
4. Plant your seeds or seedlings— if you purchase seeds, you will have to start them for about 4-14 days in starter pots or sections of an old egg container and then transplant them to your container, when the second set of leaves appears. See each seed packet for how deep to plant your seeds. If you choose to start your plants from seedlings, simply place them into your container of potting mix and lightly cover the root area with soil.
5. Sprinkle water your plants 2-3 times a week at first, then water as needed (check top of soil for dryness).
6. Make sure your plants get 6-8 hours of sunlight each day by moving your container during the day to different areas or choose a location where your container gets adequate sunlight every day.
7. When your vegetables are ripe, harvest and enjoy!

Remember- you can use your Lone Star/SNAP card to buy fruit and vegetable seeds or seedlings!!

For more detailed information, see “Vegetable Gardening in Containers” handout (EHT-062 on Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Bookstore at www.agrilifebookstore.org) or go to www.vcmga.org

To plant a garden
is to believe in tomorrow.

~Audrey Hepburn



The **Better Living for Texans** program provides free lessons for limited resource audiences on topics such as basic nutrition, food safety, and food budgets.

For more information please contact:
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Phone: (361) 575-4581
<http://agrilife.org/victoriacountyblt/>

Garden Pasta Salad

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup cooked macaroni
- 1/4 cup onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup cucumber, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup green pepper, diced
- 1 Tablespoon vinegar
- 1/2 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/8 Tablespoon parsley, chopped (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper



Directions

1. Wash hands and any cooking/preparation surfaces.
2. In a medium-size bowl, combine macaroni, onions, cucumbers, and green peppers. Mix well.
3. In a separate bowl, mix vinegar, vegetable oil, salt, and pepper. If using parsley, add that too.
4. Pour the prepared dressing over the pasta. Mix well.
5. Cover bowl and refrigerate for 30-45 minutes. Serve cold.

Makes 6 servings 34 calories per serving
From: <http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov>

Upcoming Events

Walk Across Texas! Kick-Off
Monday March 26
12:15 pm

DeLeon plaza, downtown Victoria
FREE event -

Come walk the first mile of
Walk Across Texas! with us!
Registration for this FREE 8 week
physical activity tracking program
will also be available.

Healthy Aging Conference
Thursday May 17

8:30 am—12:00 pm

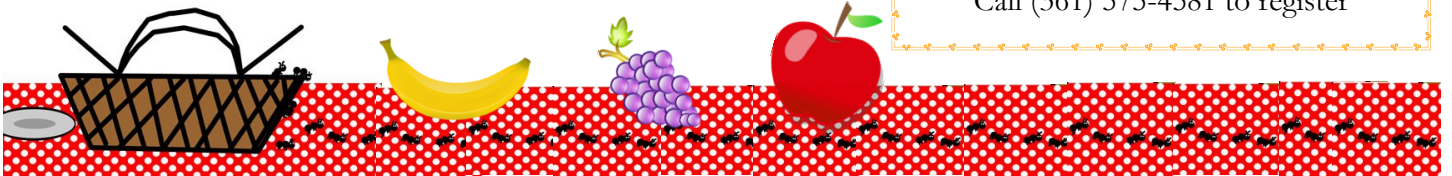
Victoria Community Center

FREE EVENT!

Caregivers & all ages welcome

Lunch provided

Call (361) 575-4581 to register



Tips for a Safe Picnic Season

It is the time of year to get outside again and enjoy the sunshine and fresh air! It's picnic time!

Avoid foodborne illness by following these tips during your next picnic or outing:

- Plan to take only the amount of food you will use
- Most foods are safe for short periods of time when stored in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs
- If you do not have a way to keep foods cool, plan to take things like whole fruit, vegetables, hard cheese, canned fish, dried meats, dry cereal, bread, peanut butter, crackers
- Don't forget paper towels and hand wipes or sanitizer for clean up
- Keep coolers in the shade and out of direct sunlight
- Use a clean plate for cooked meats and do not let raw meat juices touch other foods
- Place leftovers promptly in coolers and throw away any perishable food left out for more than 2 hours (or 1 hour in weather hotter than 90 degrees)

For more information, visit AskKaren.gov to chat with a Food Safety Specialist

Resource: www.foodsafety.gov

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program -- SNAP. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, go to YourTexasBenefits.com or call 1-877-541-7905. Texas A&M AgriLife Does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and provides equal access in its programs, activities, education, and employment.

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