

Nutrition Nuggets: Grow Your Own Veggies

by *Delisa Renideo*

Everyone knows we need to eat more vegetables -- the more the better! We also know the fresher they are, the more nutritious they are. But unless you've had a just-picked vegetable, you don't know what you're missing in terms of taste. Unbelievable! And vegetables grown during our long summer days in Alaska grow so fast that they are incredibly tender and sweet when they're first picked. When something tastes that good, you'll automatically want to eat more of them, and remember -- the more the better!

Some of you are seasoned gardeners, so you know what I'm talking about. But I know there are many of you who have never grown vegetables. I hope to inspire you to change that!

Many people grow flowers and have fun creating beauty with their efforts, but think that growing vegetables is just plain work -- or too mundane -- or boring -- or complicated. In my experience, it isn't that way at all! Instead of hiding your vegetable garden in a back corner of your yard, why not put it where you can see it and marvel at its beauty every day! You'll have much more interest in it if you put it in a place of honor, instead of treating it like a utilitarian aspect of life--like a vacuum sweeper, which is

necessary but not beautiful or exciting, so you hide it in a closet.

You can start small. One option would be to plant some vegetables in with your flowers. You'd be amazed how they can add interest and beauty. Lettuce looks almost like a

bouquet, and you can just pick the leaves around the outside, leaving the center growing so that you don't disturb its beauty. Kale comes in different varieties. Red Russian Kale is particularly beautiful to look at, and delicious to eat. Carrot tops add some feathery greenery to your beds

while growing some really yummy, sweet treats under the ground. Swiss Chard has beautiful, shiny leaves and you can grow Rainbow Chard with red, yellow, and orange stems and veins.

If you're cramped for space, you could plant veggies in pots on a patio or deck. If you have a lawn, you could convert part of it to a garden. You might consider raised beds, which can be constructed in a hurry.

Whatever space you have, I simply encourage you to consider edible landscaping. It will feed your eyes and your soul, along with your grateful body.

