

OL 305 Assignment One Homework Instructions

Online Learning: OL 305

The Urban Garden: A Small Vegetable Garden for Family Food & Nutrition

Center for Sustainable Development

<https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/urban-garden-vegetable-garden-family-food-nutrition/>

How to Grow Food in the City. How your nonprofit can start a small space vegetable garden program: Fresh vegetables for at-risk urban families.

This week's resources:

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[Small-space vegetable gardens](#)

[Edible Gardening in Small Spaces - Harris' Farmer's Almanac](#)

[The Edible Balcony - Growing Fresh Produce in Small Spaces](#)

[Fast, Fresh Garden Edibles – Quick Crops for Small Spaces](#)

What's the real goal of this 8 Week Course?

For you to develop a small vegetable garden in 8 weeks and to use this as a way of seeing what your nonprofit's constituents might need to learn from you to get their own vegetable garden growing.

Each assignment will have two components:

1. Personal Learning. You will learn how to start a small urban vegetable garden in 8 weeks. This learning experience will give you insights into what your constituents will need to learn.

2. Nonprofit Professional Development. This component will give you the tools to train staff and to teach your nonprofit's urban constituents how to grow a small vegetable garden too.

I highly advise that you start keeping a course notebook. Print out and save the weekly assignments and resources in the notebook. This notebook will be invaluable for you when your nonprofit launches their urban garden program in your community.

Assignment 1. Choosing space for your urban garden and containers for your vegetables. Where: A balcony, rooftop, a windowsill, a small plot?

Welcome to The Urban Garden. This first week will be one of the easiest weeks in the course. It will just involve doing a little thinking about where you would like to start a small garden, and what sort of containers you are the most attracted to.

Start Small. When I began growing fruits and vegetables on my roof in containers, I started small with maybe only four or six containers. That was a good idea because there was a lot to learn. I actually started in the first year in a small 3' x 10' (1M x 3M) balcony before moving up to the roof.

Also if you start small, you have a much wider variety of places that you can put your vegetable garden. And you can also do what I did—start in a convenient location and then as your vegetable garden grows (and you learn more) you can move to larger, more permanent location.

Another benefit of starting small is that you can get going right away. You don't need to spend a lot of time looking for the perfect planter for your vegetables, going out and buying it and then schlepping it home. You might have things around the house that will make a perfect planter—especially if you only need three or four to get started.

Finally, starting small allows you to see if this is an achievable project for you to grow vegetables in a small urban space—without making too much of a financial or time investment. What if you discover that you really don't have the time or the patience to do this? What if you discover that there are challenges that you hadn't anticipated?

Step 1: Space. Survey your empire. Perhaps you're living in a small duplex with a postage stamp sized back garden. Evaluate if that's a good place to get started. Does it get sun? Is there water? Is there a place to put some planters?

Perhaps you live in an apartment—but have a small terrace. Does it get sun? Is there room for a few planters?

Maybe you have access to a flat, concrete roof. These frequently tend to be the largest option. Does it get sun? Is there a way to get water up there? Do you have permission to use the roof? Are there stairs leading up there? Is it safe?

Are there other creative areas where you live where you could have a few planters?

Perhaps there isn't an ideal place where you are living right now to start off of the vegetable garden—but you still want to learn how to do it. Maybe a friend has a small garden where you could put a few containers. Maybe the local neighborhood has a place that encourages people to grow vegetables. Ask around!

Here are some links to photographs of creative spaces the people of used for small, urban vegetable gardens.

[Small Space Veggie Garden Ideas](#)

Step 2: Containers. Survey your closets, your garage, storage areas—and see if you already have some containers that you can get started with right away. The nice thing with getting started quickly is that you can get vegetables growing right away. Vegetables can take a while to grow and that will give you time to research other **options** for containers in time for the next planting.

So do you have any old flowerpots? Any old buckets? Plastic storage boxes that you don't use anymore? Anything that will hold moist soil will work. You can even use burlap bags. Or the kind of heavy duty bags that construction materials come in. Surf the Internet for ideas.

Here are some links to photographs of creative containers that people have come up with to get started with vegetable gardening.

[Google Search: Free Vegetable Garden Containers](#)

[Container Vegetable Gardening](#)

[8 Places to Find Free Gardening Containers](#)

[Micro-Farms/ Urban Farms/ Edible Gardens/ Fruit and Vegetable Gardens](#)

Here are some links to photographs of more sophisticated containers.

[Vegetable Garden Container Ideas](#)

[12 Brilliant Container Vegetable Gardening Ideas](#)

[Choosing Containers For Potted Environments](#)

Homework for Assignment 1. So your assignment for week one is to write me and tell me:

1. Where is a good space where you live (or near where you live) that you feel will work successfully for a small vegetable garden. Take a photo of the space with your cell phone and paste it into your homework.

2. What are some ideas for containers that you've come up with. Are these things that you found where you live that will work temporarily to get started with? Did you decide to go out and buy some containers? Take a photo of the containers you like (or have) with your cell phone and paste it into your homework.

3. Nonprofit Professional Development:

Time to start your notebook! Print out this homework sheet and jot down a few things that maybe you had trouble doing and that you will need to remember when you begin teaching your constituents.

I look forward to seeing your ideas for Assignment 1 and I look forward to seeing you next week in Assignment 2.