

OL 305 Assignment Three 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:

OL 305 Assignment 3 Homework Instructions

OL 305 Assignment Three Discussion

How-To Build a Small Batch, No Cost/Low-Cost Soil Solarization System

Background Research and Development of Magee Soil Solarization System

Scientific Study: Time and Temperature Requirements for Weed Seed Thermal Death

Assignment 3. Soil Part One: Select healthy soil. What kind of soil? Where to get it? How to weed-proof it.

This Week's Goal: Choose the soil that you want to use and get enough to fill at least 2 containers.

Step One. In Assignment One you selected some containers—and probably already have them by now. Hopefully your keeping the number low, perhaps down to 4 to 6 containers for your first planting. So step one is to determine how much soil will you need?

To make this simple, companies sell their bagged soil by the quart, by the cubic foot, and by the gallon. So what I typically do is to measure my container with a tape measure and find out how many cubic inches it has.

You can then go to an online conversion program like this one:

<http://www.onlineconversion.com/>

Using the conversion program from there you can determine how many cubic feet is in your container, how many quarts and how many gallons. I typically make a note of this on a Post-it.

So when you go to the garden center you can look for bags that are the appropriate size and determine what the costs will be.

Step Two. Appraise your options for soil. Buy it, make it, or dig it up?

a) Go to your local garden center and see what they have available and in what sizes and at what prices.

Try to find sterilized or weed free potting mixes or compost. If you can afford to do this, purchase enough bags to fill your 4 to 6 containers.

b) You can also make your own potting mix by combining peat moss (or coconut fiber), compost and amendments such as chicken manure and worm compost. Edward C Smith in his great book "[Incredible Vegetables from Self Watering Containers](#)" also suggests adding limestone, blood meal, colloidal phosphate, greensand and azomite. Where I live, I unfortunately don't have access to these organic amendments. But we will be studying—in depth—mixing and improving your potting soil next week in Assignment Four.

c) If you have access to garden soil or a friend's compost bin a good trick is to figure out how many gallons each one of your containers holds, and then use a 5 gallon bucket to collect the soil (or compost) using the bucket to both collect it and for filling your containers.

Homework for Assignment 3. So your assignment for week three is to write me and tell me:

1. How much soil will you need for your first group of containers?

2. After investigating your soil options tell me whether you have decided to 1) purchase potting soil or compost, or if you've decided to 2) mix your own potting soil, or 3) you are going to use garden soil or a friends compost.

3. After acquiring your soil I want you to put it into a small planter and take care of it by watering it for three weeks and see if weeds germinate. I will ask for your results in Week Six!

4. Did you have time to look at "How-To Build a Small Batch, No Cost/Low-Cost Soil Solarization System?" What did you think? Would it be worth 1 1/2 hours of your time to build a small batch system like this?

5. Choose three or four kinds of quick to germinate seeds that you bought last week and plant them in a container or two or some seed trays. This way, you'll have the excitement of watching them germinate and grow during the duration of this course and you'll have something to show for your work.

6. Nonprofit Professional Development:

Time to use 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 3 and I look forward to seeing you next week in Assignment 4.

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