

Massachusetts Master Gardener Association

FACT SHEET



Have Gardening Questions? The **Master Gardener Help Line Hours** are 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Fridays (all year) as well as Wednesdays (March-November) and Mondays (April-October).
Phone: 617-933-4929 Email: mghelpline@masshort.org.

Grow Your Own Pizza Garden

What is a pizza garden? It's a garden that includes the principal vegetable components of a pizza. It can be any size or shape. It can be part of a larger garden, on its own in the ground or in containers. With the promise of a homegrown pizza, it might be a great way to get your family into vegetable gardening.

What you need:

- Garden plot or containers
- Shovel or trowel
- Compost or potting mix
- Vegetable and herb plants or seeds

Getting started

1. Choose a garden spot in full sun –8 hours of sunlight minimum. Prepare for planting by turning over the garden and adding compost to improve the soil. You can replicate the circular shape of a pizza pie or lay out a traditional vegetable garden. If you have plenty of space, and want a large, decorative pizza divide the 'slices' with narrow pathways made of mulch or brick to access the plants in the center. Otherwise you will want to keep the circle to no more than 6 feet in diameter so you can easily weed and harvest the center of your garden.

If you choose containers, make sure they are big enough for the plants you want to grow. Twelve inches of depth is the minimum for growing tomatoes. Peppers and eggplants want at least 16 inches of depth. Herbs can grow happily in 8 inch deep containers. Be certain

your pots have several holes to provide sufficient drainage. Add potting mix, never garden soil to your containers. And remember they also need 8 hours a day of sunlight.

2. Decide what plants you want to grow. Pizza basics are tomatoes, sweet or hot peppers, onions, chives, oregano, basil, and parsley. For a larger garden include eggplant, zucchini or lettuce, for the salad to go with the pizza.

3. If you are using seeds, follow the directions on the packets. Tomatoes, peppers and onions may need to be started indoors in early April. They can be planted outside only after the soil has warmed and danger of frost is past, usually after Memorial Day in New England.

4. If you are transplanting seedlings, gently pull apart visible roots that are bunched together. Place the plants in the ground or containers at the same depth as they were growing in their individual pots, making note of the recommended spacing so they all have room to grow. Tomatoes always need some support to maximize your harvest. In container gardens, some plants may prefer to trail over the edge. Water your garden regularly because dry plants are under stress, and stressed plants do not grow. And don't forget to fertilize with a slow release fertilizer when planting or regularly throughout the growing season with a liquid fertilizer.

5. Finally in the ground, and in containers, keep up with the weeds. They will rob your plants of the light, water and nutrients they need for those family sized pizzas you're planning.

The Massachusetts Master Gardener Association is a non-profit organization whose mission is to share knowledge and experience with the public through outreach programs in education, horticulture and gardening; to provide the Master Gardener Training Program to interested members of the public; and to provide graduates of the Master Gardener Training Program with educational and practical opportunities to extend their knowledge and interests in gardening and related topics. <http://www.massmastergardeners.org/>