

Growing in Laramie, Wyoming A Beginners Guide

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Gardening in Laramie can be very challenging, but not impossible. Due to our elevation and location, the weather is not always ideal, because of this we have an incredibly short growing season. The most important thing to keep in mind when starting a garden here is timing.

When to Plant

- Understand that our spring starts later than most, because of this you may want to consider starting indoors mid to early April and transplant your starters once the outside temperature is safe for your plants.
- The best temperature will vary by each type of plant and can usually be found on the seed packet. As a general rule, the end of May or the start of June is the best time and temperatures for planting outside (not only does it have to be warm outside but the ground must be warm too before planting). By doing this you don't risk your plants having to face the harsh environment, and by starting early allows you to visualize how your garden is going to fill out.

Starting Plants

- Not all plants need to be started indoors, some plants have very short growing cycles such as radishes, greens (spinach, lettuce, kale), and some peas.
- Make sure to read your seed's packet. There should be all of the plant info as well as: how to plant it, how deep to plant, spacing, and days to maturity located on the packet itself.

Watering

- Water every day, plants need water so if you're planning on gardening seriously you need to make time for watering, preferably in the morning before it gets too hot. If you water when the sun is at its highest there is a chance that the light reflecting through the water can burn and damage your plants. Be sure to be careful it is very easy to overwater your garden.
- Although I said to water every day the amount of water can vary each day if any at all, mainly because of weather, so be sure to keep an eye on the weather (if it's going to rain, what the temperatures for the week look like, if a frost is coming in).
- An easy way of knowing how much water your garden needs is to simply stick your finger in the soil. If it is damp, a lite watering is all you need if the soil feels coarse and dry give it a good soak until you see water beginning to pool up, and if the soil is wet and almost the consistency of mud you might want to let it go without water until the soil dries out a bit.

Weeding

- Keeping your garden clear and free of weeds is a must. Do not use weed killer. Pulling weeds can be a daily task and the temptation of using herbicides is enticing, but the dangers of using such chemicals can do more harm than good, especially with vegetables and flowers. Using weeding tools will make the process much easier.

Harvesting

- Harvesting is completely different for each plant, so make sure to read your seeds packets and make notes on the specifics (vegetables length and size, days to maturity, color, and feel, are all factors of whether or not you can harvest something).

Pollinators

- Don't mind the bees, love the bees. Pollinators, such as birds, bats, bees, butterflies, beetles, and other small mammals that pollinate plants are responsible for bringing us one out of every three bites of food.
- Pollinators also sustain our ecosystems and produce our natural resources by helping plants reproduce.
- Having pollinators, such as bees, buzz around your garden is a good thing. Most Community Gardens, including Kiwanis Park Community Garden in West Laramie, have a garden bed dedicated just for attracting pollinators to help the gardens grow and thrive.

But the most important thing to keep in mind while gardening is to have fun, and enjoy it. Managing a garden is a time-consuming commitment. If you are not willing to put in the work or you feel like the garden is more of a chore then don't do it. There is nothing wrong with not liking gardening it's not for everyone.

A website that we use a lot at Feeding Laramie Valley is [https:// www.almanac.com](https://www.almanac.com). This site has great info on a large variety of plants, vegetables, and fruits.

We look forward to seeing your gardens flourish this summer and hope this beginner's guide helps you find your green thumb. If you have any questions or need help with your garden feel free to contact us at Feeding Laramie Valley.

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