



**SURVIVAL  
STRONGHOLD**

# **SIMPLY HOMEGROWN**

**Tips for Growing Your Own Food**



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## Introduction:

Have you ever stopped to think about just how much money you are spending on groceries each month? If you are like most people out there, then the answer is that you are spending too much. Think about what you are paying for. Not only are you paying for the food, but you are also paying for the cost of harvesting and transporting that food. Even if you save money with coupons and if you only buy items that are on sale, you are still spending more than you should.

What can you do about this? The best option is to learn how to grow and raise as much of your own food as possible. This can be done, and it is a great way to help you keep some money in your bank account rather than in the tills at the local grocery store. Even if you live in the city, you can grow some of your own food. You might not be able to wipe out your entire grocery bill at this point, but you will be able to cut it down.

## Better Than Store Bought

Now, let's think about some of the other issues with the food that you buy from the grocery store. Unless you are buying organic, which is very expensive, the food that you choose will likely be laden with chemicals. Growing your own means you don't have to worry about chemicals being sprayed on your food and getting into you and your family's systems. This also means you are getting fresh, healthy, non-GMO foods that go from the garden to the table.

How much are you going to be able to save when you grow your own food and raise your own chickens? It really depends on a number of things. First, you have to think about the space you have and how much you can conceivably grow. You also have to think about how much you are usually going to eat.

Let's say you are only saving \$10 a week by growing your own food (many can save quite a bit more than this to be honest). That might seem like a small amount of money, but this adds up over time. Over the course of a year, you could save hundreds of dollars, possibly much more.

Over the course of this book, we'll be discussing some effective and easy-to-implement tips that you can start using. Before long, you will start saving money and eating healthier and tastier food that you grow on your own.

Let's get started.

## Chapter 1: Utilizing Your Space

The first thing you need to do when you start to contemplate growing your own food is to consider the amount of space that you have. If you live out in the country and have some land, then you aren't going to have much to worry about. You have all the space you need for your garden, your chicken coop, and whatever else you might need.

However, we know that not everyone has a lot of land. Some people live in the suburbs and have small backyards. Others live in apartments or condominiums, and these types of homes have even less space. That doesn't mean you are out of luck though. There are still some things you can do to grow your own food and herbs, helping you cut costs.

### Using Indoor Space

If you are in a home that is small and that doesn't have much outdoor space (or any outdoor space), that doesn't mean you can't grow some of your own food. You can actually grow quite a few different types of food right inside your home.

If you have a windowsill that gets at least five to six hours of sunlight a day, then you can use seeds to grow a number of different types of vegetables. Some of the easiest to grow include peppers, eggplant, and tomatoes. You can use hanging baskets on the windows, or even window boxes.

You can even grow carrots and radishes indoors. Most of the time, root vegetables need to have quite a bit of depth, but that's not the case with radishes. You can actually grow these in relatively shallow soil, so some pot planters or boxes that are only four or five inches deep will work well. For the carrots, make sure you choose a variety of round carrots, since they do not have to go as deep to grow.

If you enjoy mushrooms and you hate paying outrageous grocery store prices for them, you will be happy to know that you can grow them indoors as well. In fact, one of the benefits is that you can grow them indoors any time of the year. You can buy bags of compost that already have mushroom spawn included. You can find this compost online, and they are generally very cheap, such as at [ShroomSupply.com](http://ShroomSupply.com).

It's even possible to grow runner beans indoors. You can put them in pots to sprout them, and as they grow, you can add cane wigwams with bamboo sticks or doweling rods so the beans can grab onto them and grow upwards. You will find that you can grow many different types of fruits and vegetables with relative ease. Just be aware that the interior of your house is going to look like a garden, but that might not be a bad thing.

## The Balcony

If you have a balcony, even just a small balcony, you can use that space to grow all of the aforementioned vegetables and fruit. You could also grow strawberries. These can grow indoors quite well too.

When you are looking at the space on your balcony, don't only think about the floor space that's available for pots and boxes. Also think about hanging baskets, which can hold even more fruits and vegetables, essentially increasing the amount of space you have for growing your balcony garden.

Of course, you have to make sure that the regulations in your home allow you to put plants on the balcony. If you own your own place and you are on your own land, it shouldn't be a problem at all. However, if you are renting an apartment, or if you are in a condominium complex with an HOA, there might be some rules as to what you can put on your balcony or deck. Read the guidelines to make sure you aren't breaking their rules, or else you might end up getting a warning and eventually fined.

Along the same lines as the balcony is the roof. Now, this is only really going to work with an apartment complex or a large condo building that has a flat roof. You could put a small garden on the roof, as long as you get permission from the manager or the HOA. It might be difficult to get permission if you are the only one asking about the rooftop garden though, so you might want to get together with some others in the building so you can talk with them about starting a community garden. We'll be covering more about community gardens later in the book.

## **The Garage and the Basement**

You will find that plants of all types are generally going to grow the best when they get natural light. They should have about six hours of sunlight each day. However, you can grow indoors as well, even when you aren't getting natural light. You can do this with a UV setup that you put in your garage or in the basement.

This can be very complicated to do, as you need to make sure you are using the proper UV lights for the crops you are trying to grow. In addition, you need to monitor these crops more closely to make sure they are getting the perfect amount of water, and that the temperature is right. It's more difficult, but it is possible.

However, it would take an entire book to go over even the basics of what you would need to know. You can find some resources online, but working with someone who already grows vegetables or fruit in this manner is probably the easiest way to learn the proper way to do it.

## **Using Outdoor Space**

If you have outdoor space, then you will have more options when it comes to growing your vegetables and fruit. When you have a lot of space, it's easy to get carried away

and to plant too much of one thing, or to forget to plant certain seeds. It is very important that you organize your garden properly before you get started. Think about how much space you will need for certain vegetables or fruit and then divvy up your plot of land so each of the seeds has enough room, and so the garden isn't just a jumbled mess.

Choose a place in your yard that is able to get the needed sunlight and that will be easy enough to water, weed, and care for properly. Clear the ground of the weeds and the layer of sod on top of the ground.

It is always a good idea to test your soil before you plant. You need to make sure that the soil is healthy enough for growing crops, and if it isn't you will need to replace the soil. In addition, after growing in the same spot for a couple of years, it is a good idea to move the location of the garden so you can get fresh soil that has more nutrients. Alternatively, you could simply rejuvenate the soil by adding nutrients via compost to it before you plant the following season.

If the soil is packed tight, you will want to loosen it by digging, as this will make it easier for the roots to go through the soil. However, if the soil is extremely dry or extremely wet, you won't need to do this. In fact, it could ruin the structure of the dirt.

Choose the plants that you are going to grow and then plant the seeds, or add the plants if you buy some that have already started. Keep an eye on the plants and make sure they are getting enough water.

The goal is always to get the most food per square foot. However, you don't want to crowd the plants so much that they end up killing one another because one plant is taking too much of the nutrients or water from the soil. No matter what type of vegetables and fruit you are growing, you need to put in the research to determine just how much space they need to thrive. Give them the proper amount of space, but make sure that you are still packing in as many plants as feasibly possible.

In addition, it is very important that you learn the life cycle of the plants, and the type of weather and soil they grow best in, or else you will not have much success with your

garden. You want to plant items that are going to do well and that will give you the best harvest. However, don't forget the next tip.

## **Grow What You Like**

This is important, and it's something that you would think most people would do naturally. However, when some people get into gardening and growing their own food, they try to find something that's easy to grow, and they don't always think about whether they like it enough to eat everything that they harvest. Try to grow fruit and veggies that you actually enjoy, and that you are already eating and buying regularly from the grocery store.

If you grow more than you can eat, it's not a problem. You can always give away your excess to people in the family, friends at work, and anyone else who might appreciate it.

## **Forego the Flowers**

Flowers are nice to look at, but they aren't the point of this book. If you are trying to grow your own food so you can get away from the GMO and factory farm vegetables and fruit, you don't want to lose valuable growing space by planting flowers.

## **It Takes Time**

When you first start gardening and growing your own food, it's tempting to stare at the ground and try to will the plant into existence. Sure, it's exciting that you are growing your own food, but as the saying goes, a watched pot never boils. It takes time for the seeds to sprout, and even more time before the vegetables and fruit will be ready for

harvesting. You have to be patient. You also have to remember that not all of your seeds are going to sprout and not all of your crops are going to be successful, especially when you first start.

Eventually, the crops will be ready, and you will have learned from any past mistakes you've made. That's not to say that all of your harvests after the first will be great, of course. Many things, such as pests and the weather will affect the success of your crops.

Just keep at it!

Once you have your first harvest picked, washed, and ready for the table, you will see (and taste) that all of the hard work has been worthwhile.

## Chapter 2: The Birds and the Bees

In this chapter, we're going to talk about other ways to lower your food budget and to get fresh, tasty food. Namely, we're talking about eggs and honey.

### The Birds... Well, Chickens

In the past, it was actually quite common for people to keep chickens in their backyard. They would have a small flock that would produce plenty of eggs for them, and they might also have the occasional chicken for dinner. This was quite popular in the 1950s and earlier, and it's finally started to make a comeback. Part of the reason it is more popular today is because people don't want unhealthy store bought eggs that come from chickens in terrible living conditions. People are all about being greener and organic. They also like the idea of saving money and having truly fresh eggs on the table every single morning.

You are the one controlling what your chickens eat, so you know that they are eating only healthy food. You also know they aren't being pumped full of chemicals or steroids. This means that the eggs you get will be healthier and tastier. Something that you will notice is that the yolks are more orange than they are yellow, and that's a very good sign.

The chickens can actually be fun to have around as well. They might not be as cuddly as a dog or a cat, but they are still interesting birds. However, you have to be responsible when you are raising chickens. You need to make sure they have a safe place to live, and that they are locked up at night so predators cannot get to them or to the eggs.

You might not think that you have anything to worry about when it comes to predators if you are living in the city, but that's not the case at all. Cities still have a number of

animals that would love nothing more than to have a nice chicken dinner, or to steal some eggs for their own breakfast. Coyotes and foxes are cunning and are often living close to, or even within, city limits. Raccoons, cats, dogs, and plenty of other animals can be a threat as well.

In addition, you need to make sure that the chickens don't start eating the seeds from your garden that you just planted. They roam around and scratch at the earth, and if they find a seed they like the looks of, they'll eat it. It doesn't matter that it was part of your garden. Chickens can be loud as well. Most are relatively quiet unless something riles them up, but it is something you should be aware of if you are going to keep chickens.

Chickens lay eggs every day. These eggs are edible. However, if you also have a rooster, it means that some of the eggs are going to be fertilized. Unless you want more baby chicks around, you probably don't want to have a rooster with your flock. Of course, if you have enough land, then you might want to have even more chickens, and the rooster is the best way to make that happen.

There are many different types of chickens, and there are many different types of coops for them, and you can buy or make on your own style of coop. Keeping chickens is a big subject, so we're only able to scratch the surface here. If the idea interests you, make sure that you learn more either online or through someone in your area who raises chickens. They might be willing to help you get started.

## **The Bees and the Sweet Honey They Make**

Does the idea of keeping bees sound crazy to you? It shouldn't. There are millions of people around the world that keep bees for the honey they produce, and quite a few of them will only have one or two hives on their property.

Even just a couple of hives can produce a large amount of honey. You will have enough for your own use, and you could even give some away, or trade it to someone else for some other food, goods, or services. For example, if you know a butcher or someone who raises and slaughters livestock, you might be able to trade them several jars of your honey for a bit of meat. You could do the same thing with the eggs if you are keeping chickens as well.

Keeping bees isn't too difficult, but you do need to have the right equipment and the right knowledge under your belt. You can find all of the equipment you need online. You might be able to find some local beekeepers who can give you some advice and even help you set up your own hive. They may even have some bees that you can buy from them. If not, you can always order them online. That's right. You can order boxes of bees online.

## City Ordinances

Whether you want to keep chickens or bees on your property, you have to be knowledgeable about the ordinances in your city. Are you allowed to keep bees? Banning beekeeping is rare, but you want to make sure you know the rules. In some cases, you will have to register that you have a hive of bees, for example, and you might need to have a permit. Since you will be getting honey from the bees and eggs from the chickens, it's generally worth it though.

## Chapter 3: A Community Garden

Here's another idea that you might want to consider in your neighborhood. It can be fun to get more people involved and setting up a community garden is easier than many might think. It's also nice to have a number of people looking out for the garden to make sure it is well taken care of all of the time. So, how do you setup a community garden? By answering the following questions and using the tips provided, you will find it much easier to get a community garden up and running in your area.

### Who Is Interested?

Talk with your neighbors and ask them whether they might be interested in starting a community garden. Let them know the benefits of growing their own food, such as how much healthier it is and how it can help them save some money. It might be a good idea to create a short presentation that you can pitch to them. You can do this on your block, or even in your apartment building if you would like. Of course, if you are doing this in an apartment building or a condo, you will need to get permission from the managers or the HOA.

### What Resources Do You Have?

Once you have people who are interested, it is time to consider all of the resources you have available. Who has certain skills and tools that they can use to help with the garden? You might already have some people who are skilled in landscaping and gardening that can help you. How much time will people be able to devote to it? Where will you place the garden? You may be able to contact the local municipal planners to look for sites in your area.

When you are choosing a site for a community garden, you will want to make sure it gets at least six hours of sunshine a day, just like you would have with your personal garden. You also need to make sure that you can get water to the garden easily, and it is always a good idea to test the soil for possible contaminants.

## Preparation and Organizing the Site

If you do not take the time to prepare your site and organize it, well, it's just going to be a jumbled mess. Once you know the amount of space you have and the number of people who will be sharing and working on the garden in the community, you can then split it up into different plots. Each person is responsible for their plot, but they can also help out with the other plots if needed. It's a good idea to keep a log of any work done for the plots though.

For example, if you go in and water your plot, you might think you are being a good neighbor by watering some of the other plots. If you don't let those plot owners know that you've watered them, they could water them on the same day, and you could actually kill the plants by drowning them.

Different community gardens will naturally have different types of setups, so you need to come up with a way to organize your particular garden. You and the other members should figure out all of the rules and you should put them down in writing so everyone knows.

It's also important that you trust the people who are a part of your community garden. You do not want anyone growing anything illegal, and you do not want anyone harming or stealing from the other plots in the garden.

## Chapter 4: Keep Learning About Plants and Animal Husbandry

Let's say you are one of the people living in a very small space right now and a big garden and chickens are simply out of the question. You can still take the other tips that we've gone over in the book, such as your own indoor plants for herbs, tomatoes, and the like, and use those. In addition, you can start to learn more about different types of plants, as well as animals such as chickens that we've talked about.

Why would you want to do this now, even though you don't have the room available? It's because you never know what tomorrow might bring. Maybe you will have a larger place and some outdoor space someday. If so, you will already have the knowledge you need to get started on your gardening. Maybe there will be a massive disaster and everyone will have to go back to a rural way of living. You will be head and shoulders above everyone else since you already know what it takes to raise chickens, grow fruits and vegetables, and be self-sufficient.

The point is that you never want to rest on the knowledge that you currently have. You want to employ that knowledge, but you always want to keep learning. This is true for gardening, raising animals, for other aspects of survival, and actually, for everything that you do in life. If you are always learning, you are always improving, and that's a good way to live.

## Conclusion:

There you have it. Simple tips that you can use to start growing your own food and herbs. When you start to employ these tips, you will find that you are able to save money on your grocery bills each month, and you will be eating healthier.

Another nice benefit of growing your own food is the satisfaction you will feel from being so much more self-reliant. You will have skills that so many people of the last few generations have simply lost. Most people today don't care about where they get their food or how healthy it is. They don't even pay attention to how much it costs them.

You know better. You've taken the time to learn how to grow and how to raise animals, and you will reap the rewards for it.

Keep learning, start growing!

## Resources:

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2013/05/23/edible-garden.aspx>

<https://communitygarden.org/resources/10-steps-to-starting-a-community-garden/>

<http://www.rd.com/home/gardening/9-vegetables-to-grow-indoors/>

<http://www.shroomsupply.com/bulk-substrates/pre-pasteurized-mushroom-compost>

<http://www.gardenguides.com/136088-use-uv-light-grow-vegetables-inside.html>

<http://www.bhg.com/gardening/yard/garden-care/ten-steps-to-beginning-a-garden/>

<http://www.bees-and-beekeeping.com/backyard-beekeeping.html>

<https://poultrykeeper.com/keeping-chickens/>