



GROW

YOUR OWN GARDEN

With this Grow Kit, now it's easier than ever to grow your own edible garden!

WHAT WE'RE GROWING

Looking through your Grow Kit, you'll see two live transplants.

At pick up, you can also select a packet of flower seeds to add to your Grow Kit.

On the back of this sheet are instructions for planting.



URBAN HARVEST

713.880.5540

www.urbanharvest.org

3302 Canal Street, Houston, Texas 77003



WHAT TO EXPECT...

Read the instructions on the back of this page and visit our website to watch our video: "How to Plant in Your Grow Kit". Each week, it will be helpful to record observations (make copies of the Garden Journal page in this packet) and take photos of your garden. Be social and share your photos and observations. Tag @urbanharvesthouston to share your grow kit, or send pictures to naomi@urbanharvest.org! We can't wait to see your harvest!

EXTRA, EXTRA!

Explore our website for recipes, and gardening tips (www.urbanharvest.org). See what others are growing by following us on Instagram and like our Facebook page for seasonal gardening advice and chef demos.

DID YOU KNOW?

Kale is part of the Brassica family, also called Cruciferae or cole crops, and one of the dominant food crops worldwide. Considered a "super food," the dark green leaves add beta-carotene (Vitamin A), plus high levels of Vitamin C & K to your diet.

Basil is an annual herb in the mint family that originated in South Asia. Basil is an excellent source of vitamin K and has anti-inflammatory and cardiovascular benefits.



HERE'S THE DIRT

WONDERING HOW TO GET STARTED?

Read below to start growing your own edible garden!

WHAT'S IN YOUR KIT?



This welcome packet and all of the basics to get growing:

- 2 — Plants ("transplant"); varieties will be suitable for cool weather season
 - 1 — 5-gallon fabric Grow Kit
 - 1 — Bag of Farm Dirt garden soil mix
 - 1 — Bag of Microlife (organic plant food for healthy plant growth, see video for instructions)
 - 1 — Sprinkler hose nozzle
 - 1 — Pair of Garden Gloves
 - 2 — Plant Labels (wooden sticks)
- Optional: (1) Envelope of Seeds (see Step 5 for planting instructions)
-



LET'S GET GROWING!

STEP 1: Find an outdoor location where your Grow Kit will be close to water, but will not be in the way. For best growth, plants need at least 6 hours of sunlight. Visit our website to learn more about what P.L.A.N.T.S. need to thrive.

TIP! Consider observing for a day or two where to place your garden; once filled, the Grow Kit may be heavy so do this step before the soil is added.



STEP 2: Watch the "How to Plant in Your Grow Kit" video in the "Gardening Videos" section. (www.urbanharvest.org/gardening-resources) youtu.be/3YEpWhcs4PA

STEP 3: Add 1/2 bag of garden soil into your Grow Kit, evenly spreading it out so the Grow Kit bag fully opens. If the soil is too heavy to lift, use a tool or pot to scoop it in.

STEP 4: Dig two holes at opposite sides of your Grow Kit bag. Make holes the size of the pots that contain the transplants. Carefully remove a plant from the pot (as shown in the video). Check the roots, if they are bunched together, gently "tickle" them to loosen. Place the root ball at the same level as it was in the pot (not too deep nor above the soil level). Refill the hole with soil and pat down lightly around the roots.

STEP 5: Open the flower seed pack. For small seeds, put 1-2 "pinches" of seeds (15-20 seeds) in your hand. **SAVE THE REST** in case seeds don't germinate. Using your "pincher" fingers, gently sprinkle the seeds evenly over the rest of the garden soil (like putting pepper on your food). Lightly pat the seeds to make contact with the soil.

STEP 6: Water your garden using a watering can or small container. A garden hose with the hose nozzle attached and set to a light mist or gentle rain can also be used. Be careful not to wash out the seeds. Continue gently moistening the soil until you see water draining out.

Check the soil every day, and if dry to the touch, sprinkle the top layer lightly to keep the seeds moist. On hot days, you can even lightly water twice a day until the flower seeds start growing. The transplants will need more water to develop deep roots so concentrate more water around each plant at least 2-3 times a week, especially if the leaves start to wilt.

We can't wait to grow with you!

HEALTHY HARVEST

Now that your garden is planted and growing, these quick tips will help you enjoy your harvest!

KALE

This is the dark green transplant in your kit. You will be able to harvest and eat the leaves as soon as it doubles in size. Harvest the leaves from the bottom using a small pair of scissors. This will allow the center to keep growing new leaves for the entire cool weather season. When the plant leaves are larger, wash and remove the center vein to use leaves for “garden taco” wraps, salads or to add to favorite recipes. Kale is a cool weather favorite and will only grow more vigorously as fall turns into winter.

TIP!

Keep bottom leaves off of the soil. Continue harvesting from the bottom, and the plant will grow taller with larger leaves.

BASIL

The other transplant is sweet basil, frequently used fresh on pizzas, in all types of tomato dishes, and to make pesto! You will be able to harvest and eat the basil leaves in just a few weeks from planting. Begin harvesting leaves when the plant has multiple sets of leaves. Basil grows great in Houston’s warm fall months but may be damaged by the first frost. Be prepared to protect the basil, or use garden pruners to clip the entire plant at the stem and use leaves for pesto if a freeze is forecasted.

TIP!

Pinch off flowers and seed heads when they grow to prolong the plant’s life and enhanced flavor. Be prepared to protect basil from cold snaps.

COOL WEATHER FLOWERS

You may also choose one type of cool weather flower to add to your Grow Kit:

Sweet Alyssum has a sweet fragrance that attracts both humans and pollinators. Flowers, leaves and stems are all edible and have a slightly sweet, peppery flavor similar to kale, as both are in the Brassica family.

Violas are a dainty violet- and yellow-faced miniature pansy with edible flowers that are delicate and perfumed. These flowers have tiny seeds; just use 1-2 pinches of seeds.

Nasturtiums are tender annuals that do well in Houston’s cold season when temps remain above freezing, or if they are protected. Both leaves and flowers have a strong, peppery flavor that can be added to salads. Plant 2-3 seeds from the packet and leave the strongest one to grow. Move the others into their own pot or another garden bed.

TIP!

Harvesting edible flowers and leaves, take a bowl of water with you to keep them hydrated. Floating flowers also make a delightful table centerpiece!

P.L.A.N.T.S.

WHAT YOUR GARDEN NEEDS TO GROW!



With your Grow Kit planted, it's important to keep it at its best.

Remember P.L.A.N.T.S. and you'll grow a healthy harvest!

PLACE

The Grow Kit is your garden space. Is it in a good location? Are there any unwelcomed visitors? Investigate if you have attracted any insects? Do they have wings and fly (bees, moths)? Are they IN or ON the soil (pillbugs, snails)?

LIGHT

It's important your Grow Kit receives at least 6 hours of light every day. Leaves capture energy from the sun. Sunlight also provides heat which is needed for plants to survive. Each plant has an optimal temperature range depending on the crop and the variety.

AIR

Keep your Grow Kit in an open space. Plants take in carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the air and convert it into glucose (a type of sugar). Plants use glucose to grow strong and for some plants, they will eventually flower and grow new seeds.

NUTRIENTS

Any added fertilizer provides the plants with nutrients, along with the soil itself. If your plant needs more nutrients, you might see leaves change from green to yellow. Take pictures and make sure you document it in your Garden Journal!

THIRSTY

Water transports nutrients from the soil into the structures of the plant. It helps keep plants standing strong and upright, not wilted or droopy. Water also keeps plants cool as it evaporates. Each of the plants growing together in the same bag may not need the same amount of water – the best way to find out how much to water is to observe them! Each time you water, write down how much you gave them (use the same watering can or container). The next day, check the soil moisture with your fingers, the soil should be damp, and a little should stay on your fingers. If the soil is dry, water again, and increase the amount of water on the next watering day. As the plants grow larger, they will require more water.

The transplants need to be watered deeply 2-3 times a week. This will help the plant to grow deeper, stronger roots. As the weather gets cooler, 1-2 times a week is usually enough.

The seeds will need to be watered lightly 1-2 per day for at least the first week and then every other day as the plants grow larger. Once they are growing well, all of the plants can be watered at the same time and at the same rate.

SPACE

Each plant has its own specific space requirement. Plants that are spaced too close together will be stressed as they compete for their basic needs, weakening some of the plants. Crowded plants will also be more susceptible to damaging insects.

[Lesson adapted from Junior Master Gardener: Teacher/Leader Guide.
Texas Cooperative Extension, 2001]