

# INTRODUCTION

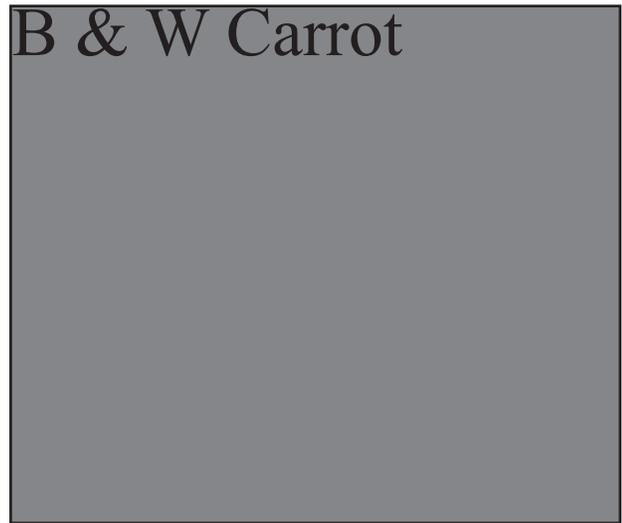
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## WHO WE ARE:

Wilmington College Grow Food Grow Hope works to increase the access of fresh food for families, promote the benefits of local food production and to raise awareness about self-sustainability in our daily food habits.

We believe that by supporting community and backyard gardening projects, we can create dynamic and self-reliant communities in Southwestern Ohio while providing people with the means they need to live more healthy, productive and meaningful lives.

To meet our goals, we maintain the 40-plot Friends of Hope Community Garden on the Wilmington College campus, provide the means and manpower for families to establish their own backyard garden plots, support school yard garden initiatives, host workshops and work with regional partners to establish new community garden sites.



B & W Carrot

## OUR GARDENING PHILOSOPHY:

Our garden projects are built around four core principles: Sustainability, Accessibility, Affordability and Productivity.

We emphasize a common sense approach to gardening, where gardeners use the tools and resources available to them rather than become reliant on expensive treatments and wasteful practices.

We want our gardeners to have the skill to grow, the knowledge to teach and the confidence to share. By pairing apprentice gardeners with more experienced mentors, our programs are designed to give gardeners a foundational understanding of what it takes to garden. It's our hope that by providing a basic set of skills to be successful, our gardeners will be able to develop the expertise to turn their garden projects into valuable community resources.

A successful garden gives worth to a place. We believe that our garden projects are more than just a way for people to feed themselves. They are a means for individuals, families and communities to show how productive their work can truly be.

## WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE?:

Thank you for taking the time to read the Get 'Em Growin' Beginner's Guide to Small-Plot Gardening. Over the next few pages you'll find all the information that you need to know to grow a successful organic vegetable garden of your own.

Gardening can be intimidating, especially for those just starting out. Many times, you don't know what to plant or where to plant it. What tools to use and when. When to water. When to weed. And what the heck is this compost stuff anyway? Even for the most determined beginner, it can add up to a lot.

We can't have that at Grow Food Grow Hope.

We want to make gardening as accessible as possible. We want to shed light on the skills, techniques and knowledge that many experienced gardeners take for granted to show that with a little grit and determination anyone can grow their own food.

While gardeners from all different backgrounds and skill levels will find valuable resources in this guide for managing their own gardens, this guide is really for the beginning gardener. It's designed to get down to the bare-boned basics that ever gardener needs to know to be successful.

## **WHAT WILL I FIND INSIDE?:**

The guide is generally organized into four sections: Soil-The Foundation, Planting & Planning, Care and Maintenance and Season Extension.

In the following pages, you'll find introductory lessons on everything from how to build your own bed to planting & planning basics, general care and maintenance, season extension and composting. You'll also find a dictionary of garden jargon, a gardener's tool guide, directions on reading a seed packet and much more.

As a beginner, they should lead you through a growing season from early spring to late fall (roughly 7 months). Eventually, we hope that by working with a Garden Mentor, attending GFGH workshops and by conducting research of their own, our gardeners will have the expertise to become Four Season Growers.

## **HOW DO I USE THIS GUIDE?:**

We want you to treat this guide just like your gardening space, as a living guide that grows over time.

Mark it up, makes notes, personalize it to your experience. Use this guide not only to learn, but also to reflect on what worked for you and what didn't. This guide provides you with a foundation to be successful, but it's up to you to make it work.

But don't let us just tell you about it. See for yourself.

**Get out and Grow!**

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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