

Ranae L. Aspen
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April is here! Nebraska weather in spring can change several times during the day, but rest assured, warmer weather and gardening is right around the corner. Now is a great time to begin planning your home garden. Successful gardening is dependent on the plans you make for your garden right now.

When deciding whether to have a garden, you will want to ask yourself several questions. Do you have time, and do you have space for a garden? Space can be an issue; however, you can think outside of the box. Container gardens are helpful for the space issue, and they can be great for beginning gardeners. It takes less time to keep the plants free from weeds and is overall easy to maintain. A great economical way to begin is to find plastic lick tubs at the local recycling center or inquire with area cattle producers, they would be happy to give the lick tubs away. Drill holes in the bottom of the tubs, crush plastic milk containers to fill in the bottom, add dirt and begin planting. If you have space for a traditional garden, you will need to decide on the size and design where the plants will be planted. A great resource for this can be found here:

<http://buylocalnebraska.org/home-gardening> .

Growing your own fruits and vegetables are a great way for you and your family to try new things. What better way than to experience how fruits and vegetables grow, a whole farm to plate experience can happen with gardening. Gardening is also a way to fit in physical activity. Growing produce is overall a win-win situation.

Practice safety with gardening. Wearing gloves and goggles for outdoor protection is helpful. Also, in the upcoming summer months, it is important to stay hydrated. On a normal day, you

need at least 8 glasses of water a day. When you are doing physical work in the heat, you will need to increase your water intake.

Gardening is not for everyone, but if you begin small, and learn as you go along, the rewards outweigh the negatives. If you decide to garden, do let me know how your garden grows! Stay healthy and enjoy the warmer weather!