

## Get Your Gardening On!

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By *Katy Mitchell-Gilroy*

April is **National Gardening Month**. What's that you say? Why is the **Food Bank For New York City** blogging about National Gardening Month? For one very simple reason: Gardens are a great source of healthy home grown **fruits and vegetables!** (And we do realize it's the end of the month, but it's still the beginning of garden season!)

"But wait!" you're saying. This is **New York City**, where people live elbow to elbow and building a garden on the **Great Lawn** in **Central Park** is illegal. Where can you garden? Get creative; you could try a tiny **container garden**, where produce is grown in flower pots, boxes, or even recycled materials. There's no limit to what can be grown in a container.

If you have space for it, you might think about a **large backyard garden**. The Northeast allows a lot of fruits and vegetables to be grown outdoors. Cool springs and hot summer days filled with sunshine (and usually just enough rain) give a backyard gardener a wide variety of fruits and vegetables to choose from. Some of my favorites are tomatoes, eggplants, peppers (green, red, yellow, orange and even purple!) and fragrant herbs.

And for those with no space for a container garden and no backyard for a garden, have you thought about a community garden plot? Community gardens, common in Europe but taking hold here in New York, offer urban gardeners a plot of land to grow, well, whatever you'd like! Community gardens are located throughout New York City; you may pass one as you walk to work! These plots of plants and flowers and the occasional garden gnome are beautifying the city every day.

Gardening also brings to mind thoughts of fresh produce. Food Bank For New York City is bananas for produce — we distributed more than 14 million pounds of fresh produce last year! We even offer shares in a **Community Supported Agriculture** (CSA) program — which offers a sliding-scale pay structure — at our **West Harlem Community Kitchen**. (Interested in joining a CSA? [Learn more!](#))

Even if you don't get going until it turns to May, we hope you'll celebrate **National Gardening Month** and help build a healthy NYC with the Food Bank!

**Do you have any success stories of gardening with limited space in NYC? Help our neighbors get going — share your stories in the comments!**



*Backyard garden at the Food Bank's **Community Kitchen & Food Pantry of West Harlem**. Our garden provides fresh herbs, vegetables and fruit for soup kitchen service at the **Community Kitchen**.*