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SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWING YOUR OWN FOOD

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HOW TO LIVE MORE SUSTAINABLY

Being more sustainable might mean different things to different people. To simplify, it is about using the fewest amount of resources as possible in order to help protect the earth and climate. It is about reducing your carbon footprint by limiting the resources you use, which can be done in a variety of different ways.

STOP BUYING UNNECESSARY THINGS

A super easy way to dip your feet in sustainable living is not to buy products that are unnecessary to your life, and are wasteful. This might include plastic water bottles when you know you can get clean water by just using a water filter at home. If you are buying paper plates and using them at home, is that really necessary? You can use your glass plates and wash them when you are done. Any foam paper products are terrible for the environment, so switch to something that can be reused or at the very least, recycled.

EAT NATURALLY AND LOCALLY

Another great way to live more sustainably is to buy local and natural foods. This is easy to do with local farmer's markets and CSAs. Many locations also offer delivery or pickup of produce, meat, eggs, and honey from multiple farms in your area, so that is another great resource to look into. When you eat naturally and locally, you are helping your local farming community, getting fresh ingredients, and saving your environment with less transportation of goods. It also tends to use less materials for transport.

KNOW WHAT YOU CAN REUSE OR RECYCLE

It helps to know what you can recycle, and what can be reused in order to live more sustainably. For example, you know it is hard to recycle plastic food storage bags, but there are reusable bags that can be used in their place. When you empty a glass jar from mayonnaise or pickles, rinse it out and put it in your glass recycling, or you can even reuse it as a food storage container.

REDUCE WASTE IN YOUR HOME

Reducing waste in your home and that you use on a regular basis, including reusing and recycling, is a great way to live more naturally. It lets you be kinder to the environment, reduce your carbon footprint, and make use of as many materials as possible.

START MEAL PLANNING AND COOKING AT HOME

A simple way to start reducing waste in your home is to do meal planning and cook more meals at home. This helps you to reduce waste from processed foods and frozen food containers. Think about how many food containers you end up throwing away and not recycling just from eating out. Fast food restaurants wrap every single food item, plus most leftover containers are not recyclable.

When you use a lot of processed ingredients, all that plastic and glass is just using precious resources that end up getting thrown away. The more you cook from home with fresh, whole ingredients, the less waste you are going to use.

REUSE YOUR CONTAINERS

There are likely many containers you purchase that hold different foods and ingredients, that you currently just throw out. But before you put anything in the trash, consider if it can be reused for something else.

For example, those plastic butter or margarine containers are a good size for smaller amounts of leftovers. You can reuse glass jars as jars to hold salads or other meal prepping ingredients. Often times, deli meats come in a plastic container that works great for bringing your lunch to work.

LEARN HOW TO COMPOST

Compost is the practice of taking much of what you would have thrown away, and instead returning it to the earth. All you really need is a good-sized compost bin where you will throw items like egg shells, banana peels, potato peels, coffee grounds, avocado skin, and vegetable scraps. You can also compost other items like grass clippings, printer paper, newspaper, and yard waste. Compost is great to add to your garden as natural fertilizer.

REDUCE WASTE IN THE KITCHEN

A lot of the waste you go through in your home happens in the kitchen. Think of some more ways you can reduce waste in this area of your home.

USE MICROFIBER CLOTHS INSTEAD OF PAPER TOWELS

Stop buying single-use paper towels! These are such a waste and can't be recycled. Microfiber cloths works just as well, if not better, to soak up liquids, clean, dry your hands, and so much more.

GET REUSABLE BAGGIES FOR LUNCHES AND SNACKS

Those plastic storage bags are not necessary when you can get reusable ones that are easy to rinse and keep using over and over again.

LIVING NATURALLY: GROW YOUR OWN FOOD

Living naturally encompasses many different areas, all of which are great for your physical, mental, and emotional health. To boost your physical health even more, consider growing your own food. This is a great way to save money, have organic produce available to you, and reduce how much you need to buy from local supermarkets.

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER GROWING YOUR OWN FOOD

Why grow your own good? Here are some benefits to keep in mind.

YOU WILL SAVE MONEY

The first benefit you get from growing your own food is being able to save some money. The more you can grow on your own, the less you are spending at farmer's markets or grocery stores.

IT SAVES YOU EXTRA TRIPS TO THE STORE

With instant access to produce and herbs that you grow at home, you might not need as many trips to the grocery store. You can work on a meal plan that uses more of what you are growing at home, so that your grocery trips are minimal and just need the ingredients you don't have on hand.

YOU GET ORGANIC FOOD

Don't forget that when you grow your own food, you have full control over how organic it is. You can grow it without any pesticides or herbicides, allowing you to have the cleanest, freshest food possible.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFOREHAND

Before you begin growing your own food, there are some important things to be aware of.

IT TAKES TIME

You do have to be a little patient when you begin your journey of growing your own food and herbs. If you want to use your lavender for medicines at home, prepare to wait a few weeks, but longer for many other herbs and produce.

YOU NEED SPACE

You are probably already aware that you need space to grow, either indoors or outdoors, but really think about what this means. Not only do you need space for the plants, but many seeds and plants can't be grown near others. This is why the research is so important.

BETTER TO START SMALL

Lastly, we want to encourage you to start small and minimal when growing food and herbs. Choose just a few different varieties, instead of attempting to plant an entire garden full of fruits and veggies right from the start. This is a big transition and might change your lifestyle a bit with all the added care and watering.

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

Now that you have some background information about growing your own food, here are a few tips to help get you started:

PLANTS THAT ARE EASY TO GROW

If this is your first time ever growing anything, start with the herbs and plants that are easiest to grow. This includes strawberries, tomatoes, potatoes, garlic, onion, and most herbs.

MANY PLANTS GROW INDOORS

If you don't have a lot of space in your backyard, you can grow tomatoes, lemons, strawberries, and even avocados right in your home in containers.

The most important thing to remember is to do research and planning, start with easy plants, and go from there.

5 TIPS FOR GROWING YOUR OWN HERBS

Living a more natural and holistic life has many facets, including what you eat and where you get your food. To be as holistic as possible, consider growing herbs from home. Not only can you use herbs to cook, but you can also use some of them for healing and natural medicine. You will save money and ensure you have the most organic herbs possible.

1. HAVE A PLAN BEFOREHAND

The first step to growing your own herbs is the prep stage. You want to take some time figuring out where you will place your garden, what you intend to grow and ways you are going to use them, and how much room you are going to need. This is when the research comes in handy. The worst thing you can do is just go buy some seeds and fertilizer, and start planting without having planned exactly what you intend to do beforehand.

2. DECIDE BETWEEN SEEDS OR START PLANTS

There are two main ways to grow herbs; you can start them from seeds, or you can purchase plants that have been started for you. Naturally, if you are a beginner at growing, the plants are going to be much easier for you. This is recommended for most people who are starting their very first herb garden, as you ease into caring for herbs, without having to start them from seeds.

3. BECOME FAMILIAR WITH EACH HERB

Before you start planting your herbs, understand what each herb needs you to do as far as care and growing it healthy. Every herb will have different guidelines, such as how much water it needs, when to give it direct sunlight, and whether it needs to be in a container or in the ground.

For example:

Mint grows very fast, and works best in a container with only mint in it. Mint grows well in sunlight, but it can also use a bit of shade and still grow well.

With rosemary, it grows better in cool climates that have sun, and needs to be brought indoors during the winter.

4. CARING FOR YOUR HERBS

While many herbs can be grown indoors in planters, they still need to be close to a window. Some plants may need to be moved outdoors for at least a few hours, as most herbs should get 3-4 hours of direct sunlight each day. Again, this will depend on your herbs.

Remember that care includes sunlight and temperature control, watering, and using the right soil.

5. HARVEST WHEN READY

Something to keep in mind when harvesting your herbs is that the more often you do it (when they are ready), the healthier the herb plant will continue to grow. Again, look at each variety's instructions to understand harvesting guidelines.