

that they're at least eight inches deep. Stay away from flower boxes, as most aren't deep enough. You might have to water a bit more in containers, but, otherwise, it's simple.

People with shady yards can also get a plot at a community garden. In fact, that's a great way for a beginner to start, as you can meet other gardeners who can tell you what you need to know. You could swap seeds with people growing stuff you're interested in but don't know that much about. It could be lots of fun.

Do you keep a garden diary?

In the spring and summer, I sketch out my gardens. Nothing fancy. Just a record of what was planted where. In the fall, I list how successful it was. If it was lousy, I eliminate it and try something new.

Any other end of the season activities?

I save seeds from the flowers I grow. You can save a lot of money by saving seeds from your plants — plus it's fun. In the fall, I collect the seeds and store them away for the next year.

The thing about vegetable gardening is that you shouldn't take it too seriously, worrying if you're doing something the right or the wrong way. There is no right or wrong way to gardening; it's what works for you. And the benefits are huge — fresh vegetables, flowers, and just being out in nature. Like my grandparents believed, it's sacred ground. ♣

FAVORITE FLAVORS

Tony DiPietro recommends these vegetable varieties: Red Sails lettuce, Cherry Belle radishes, Avon spinach, Danvers Half-Long carrots. As for tomatoes: "I grow cherry tomatoes exclusively now because I love their flavor. Whatever variety the nursery stocks, as long as it's a cherry."