

Amy, Johnny:

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Does your child think peas come from a box and corn from a can? This is a dreadful misconception — and one that you can change if your child has a chance to grow some vegetables in a garden of his own. It can be a lot of fun — and a real eye-opener for you, too, if you've never had a vegetable garden, either.

Here are some hints to make this venture a success.

Don't make the garden large. Keep it mini — at least for a first try. You are not trying to feed the whole neighborhood — just educate them!

Choose a sunny spot. Most vegetables won't produce anything unless they get at least six or eight hours of sunshine, the more the better. Also stay clear of trees and shrubs. Their roots will compete.

The soil should be loose and soft and easy to work — or the kids won't be able to dig in it and the plants won't grow well. The best way to improve the soil texture is to work in lots of organic material — compost, peat moss, sawdust.

JOHNNY AND AMY might as well grow something they enjoy eating — and not a vegetable they "hate." Although all vegetables are fun, some are easier to grow than others, and some yield a crop much more quickly. Also, in limited space, choose kinds that don't take up lots of room.

Radishes can be planted early in the season. The seeds are large enough to be easy to handle and they sprout in a few days, and can be eaten in three weeks. Beans take longer, but are big and easy to plant, and produce a good crop. Most kids like tomatoes. Big ones can be tied to a stake or trellis, but kids might prefer growing the little cherry tomatoes.

In fact, there are all kinds of midget vegetables — tiny heads of cabbage, mini corn plants, etc. that kids seem to have an affinity for.

Why not look through the seed catalogs with your children and let them help choose?

Read the information on the packets. It will give all kinds of good advice — when to plant, how deeply, and how far apart to space the seeds and the plants. It really pays to follow this advice, although a little crowding isn't too serious.

LET THE KIDS pick the vegetables when they are young and tender. They will really taste great.

If the kids — or you — are anxious to get started, start some seeds indoors on a sunny window sill.



FLOWERING DOGWOODS come in a number of varieties, all beautiful to behold. The redbud is suitable for shade and an easy one to grow.

For Your '73 Garden — A Lovely, Flowering Tree

Are you looking for something new in flowering trees?

If so the Bradford pear or Callery pear (*Pyrus Calleryana*) may be just what you want. This is a handsome small tree which grows about 25 feet tall. It has a symmetrical pyramidal form and handsome glossy deep green leaves which turn a striking blend of bronzy red and yellow when Autumn comes.


In Spring it is laden with white blossoms, but it produces no edible fruit. A special advantage of this lovely recent introduction is that it seems to be immune to diseases and is not troubled by pests.

There is a size and shape of flowering tree to fit every garden from those that grow 10 feet tall to the tallest, which are about 30 feet in height.

In addition to the Bradford pear, there are many other flowering trees that grow well in this area. Pink or white flowering dogwoods are suitable for a shady area.

FOR A SUNNY AREA consider a hawthorn or flowering crab. There are dozens of crab trees available with flowers of white, pink, rose or crimson. Most have attractive fruits which birds relish. Hawthorns also have the bonus of attractive fruits as well as beautiful blossoms.

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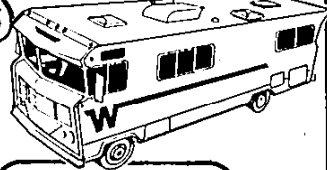
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Lawns Require Loving Care

One of the signs of Spring that we all look for every year is the first Robin hopping across the fresh green lawn. Nature takes care of supplying the Robin, but we have to provide the green lawn.

Lawns really do require lots of care. It is a steady job with no "let up" all season -- but there doesn't seem to be any good alternative. Good thick turf is still the best ground cover for kids to play on.

If the soil was properly prepared before the lawn was seeded or sodded the battle is half won. The soil should have lots of organic material in it so roots can penetrate deeply and so the soil doesn't dry out too quickly.

To keep the lawn green and growing -- so it will need lots of mowing -- spread on a slow release organic-type fertilizer. Mow regularly and often enough so no more than 1/3 of a blade is nipped off at each cutting.

It is possible to spend a lot of time, a lot of effort and a lot of money for chemicals and produce a lawn that is flawless and smooth as velvet. But really, is it worth the effort? What is a lawn for? It should be a play place, a nice setting — not a status symbol.

Keep it reasonably fresh and green and you will have what well-known ecologist Bill Staff calls the "All-American lawn" — no, not perfect, but good enough.