

START HERE:

1. What is your ultimate GOAL?

- a. Are you growing for household production, health and well-being, community food sovereignty, or to sell your produce?
- b. How does this ultimate goal break down into smaller goals along the way?
- c. *This helps determine the scale of what you need to produce, the type of plants you'll want to include, the research or engagement you'll need to do, and the best location of the growing space.*

2. Where can you grow?

- a. A front or backyard, patio, or balcony?
- b. A local community garden, church lot, food pantry, or school garden?
- c. A vacant or adjacent property in your neighborhood?
- d. *This reflection will help you focus on what you can do with the space you have, what methods are suited to that space, what are the conditions you have for growing (area, light exposure, water sources, see next section). Knowing these constraints help you select the right amount of resources you will need.*

3. What resources do you have to contribute to the project?

- a. Time, family/neighbors/community members to help out
- b. Tools, materials (e.g. soil, garden beds), source of seeds or seedlings, water
- c. Budget, finances, fundraising opportunities, donations, etc.
- d. Expertise and community of practice
- e. *This goes beyond just finances, as time and knowledge is also a major factor. If you have fewer resources to begin with, start small and build in scale as you gain practice and confidence. Look for opportunities to connect with other growers through community gardens or organizations. Visit farmer's markets and volunteer with local urban farms to talk to those doing what you want to do.*

NEXT: Using the first set of questions, you should be able to narrow down some key points: Where you will be growing, the time and resources you have, and the scale/amount of what you can plant in your first season. Now we will consider what methods and crops will work best:

4. What are the growing conditions in your space?

- a. How much sunlight will you get in a day? When do you get sun?
 - i. Less than 4 hours of sunlight = Shade
 - ii. 4-6 hours of sunlight = Part Shade
 - iii. 6-8 hours of sunlight = Full Sun
- b. Where does water flow and collect in the space? Do you have standing water after a storm?
- c. Where is your water source? How will you access it?
- d. **What is the type and condition of your soil?**
 - i. Most MO native soil is primarily clay (light colored, forms large chunks, doesn't absorb water readily)
 - ii. In urban areas, some soils will also have heavy metals and need to be tested for safety

- e. Where is the wind exposure? Where are the slopes and level areas located?
 - f. What wildlife or domestic animals are in the area? Will you need to fence or create deterrents?
- 5. What methods will you use and what tools and materials will you need to do so?**
- a. Will you need to use containers?
 - b. Will you dig up or remove sod for a new in-ground bed or row?
 - c. Will you build on top of existing soil/grass, e.g. sheet mulching?
 - d. Will you need to create terraces to manage a slope?
- 6. What do you *want* to grow? (refers back to overall goal)**
- a. What produce or herbs do you purchase and use most often in your recipes?
Can any of these be grown during our growing seasons?
 - b. Keep it simple! Even growing just a few crops in each season will give you great experience and time to learn about the process
 - c. Consider others: if doing a collective project you may conduct 'surveys' in your community or neighborhood for crop preferences (or informal talks!)
 - d. If growing for sale/market: do research at local farmers markets to see what is in demand, or develop relationships to determine the needs of local businesses that could become wholesale clients
- 7. What crops will do well in the conditions you have?**
- a. Using the shortlist of crops that you want to grow: research their light requirements, soil requirements (e.g. need soils with good drainage, or tolerates clay soil, etc), water requirements (e.g. tolerates dry soil, needs a lot of water).
 - b. Maximize the chance for success by selecting those that grow well within the parameters of your growing conditions and space
 - c. Smaller space? Using the [square-foot garden framework](#) can help identify how many plants will fit in 1 square foot. This is also helpful to calculator space requirements with pots that are 1 ft in diameter.

A NOTE on Containers: Make sure your containers are large enough for the plants you want

- Large crops: like tomatoes or corn will do best in 10 gallon containers
- Moderate size crops: including greens, peppers, beans, will be fine with 5 gallon pot
- Root crops: surface area is important, so planting in containers with a larger diameter (18"+) will allow you to plant more of each crop per container; root crops like potatoes and carrots do really well in containers or grow bags

Provide an example from small (patio/vertical) to medium (raised bed/multiple beds) to large (>acre)

Have someone run through for each scale

Thanks to support from:

