



Gardening During COVID-19

Please note: COVID-19 is reported to live on surfaces for an extended period of time.*

- As an aerosol, for up to 3 hours (e.g. sneezing, coughing, etc.)
- Clothing – several hours up to a day
- Up to 4 hours on copper
- Up to 24 hours on cardboard
- Up to 2-3 days on plastic and stainless steel
- Up to 4 days on glass surfaces like a Smartphone

General health and safety:

1. Exercise physical distancing when required to interact with others.
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and before eating or preparing food. (CDC)
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. (CDC)

Spring has sprung and as we continue to physical distance, gardening is a perfect way to get fresh air, exercise, improve your mental health, and connect with nature. Start by planning a course of action and with these tips, you can have your garden flourishing in no time.

1. **Clean up your yard** - Prepare your yard by raking up leaves and picking up branches. Before discarding yard waste, check locally to see if your community has suspended yard waste collection. If you clean up your yard, consider starting a compost pile or bag.
2. **Compost** - Compost closes the loop. It increases organic matter in the soil helping retain soil moisture and supporting healthy growth of plants, trees, and vegetable crops. There are several options available for purchase online for both indoor and outdoor compost bins.
3. **Start small** - If you don't have a lot of gardening experience or live in an urban environment without a lot of space, gardening can seem like a daunting or impossible task. You can easily add green to any space by starting small and planting in a container or making a vertical garden on your balcony. No matter the size, ensure your plants get enough sunlight throughout the day.
4. **Plant native species** - Native species, including trees, shrubs, and wildflowers, are critical to enhancing biodiversity, rebuilding ecosystems, and supporting pollinator health.
5. **Grow your own food** - Now is the perfect time to consider planting fruits and vegetables at home. Growing food at home not only could help you skip some trips to the grocery store, but it could also provide some much-needed stress relief.

Green spaces restore our communities and help the environment by sequestering carbon, reducing pollution, and reducing soil erosion. Gardening is also a healthy activity that burns calories, improves mental health, and offers the opportunity to connect with nature in a safe way during COVID-19.

*According to a new study from National Institutes of Health, CDC, UCLA and Princeton University scientists in The New England Journal of Medicine. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces>