

HOW TO PLANT A HEALTHY GARDEN

Follow the guiding rule of **CLOSE**:

- **C** = Close. The garden should be close to where you live or work
- **L** = Local. Everything used should be available locally. Use tools, plants, seeds that you already have
- **O** = Organic. None of the materials used are chemical/synthetic.
- **S** = Small and simple. Keep it small for success, a few square meters to start, otherwise it will seem too hard. Stop the water with deep holes at the edge of the garden, under a water run-off if possible. Double dig, dig deep, about 30-60 cm, so that the roots go deeper. Add organic matter (see below) and the soil will hold more water and be more nutritious.
- **E** = Easy. The concepts are easy to see, do, teach and learn. The initial planting may look like hard work, which is why involving younger family members is recommended, but the maintenance of the garden is easy.

Simple steps:

- Slow the water (make a small water trench to direct the water, dig deep and sizable water collection holes at the corner(s) of the garden, the holes can be as deeper as 30-60cm)
- Add organic materials (see below)
- Plant close, plants and seeds you've collected from your environment
- Harvest often
- Eat well
- Keep managing your garden and improving it for the next planting (the cycle continues)

A variety of materials can be used as organic matter, making your own compost, and mulch to cover the garden bed:

Organic matter

- Crop residue: maize, sorghum, millet, wheat, beans, cowpeas
- Animal manure: Manure from cattle, goats, and poultry
- Green manures: Tithonia (Mexican sunflower), sesbania, and lantana leaves

Compost (You can make your own compost, see directions below, but it takes 3 months to be ready, so don't wait to start your garden! You can mix it, then use it later)

- Vegetative materials: maize stalks, soybean, bean residues, and sorghum straws
- Farm waste: sweet potato vines, dry and green grass, lantana, leaves and stems of degradable plants
- Animal and poultry wastes: cow, goat, sheep, chicken and rabbit dung

Mulch (to top dress the garden, to hold in moisture)

- Plants materials: dry grass, leaves, and stems of plants
- Crop residue: similar to those used for compost, such as maize and bean residues
- Green manures: leaves of plants like lantana and tithonia

To make your own compost pile:

- Brown, carbon rich, dry leaves, straw of grasses without seeds – 5 large sacks
- Green, nitrogen-rich grass, tree leaves, or garden waste – 1 large sack

- One 20-liter bucket of very dry cow manure, old compost or top quality soil as a source of decomposing bacteria
- Four 20-liter size buckets of water (needed to activate the bacteria)
- One-meter-long stick (bark removed) to serve as a simple thermometer
- Old grain sacks to cover the entire pile. A bit of clear plastic is optional to observe condensation retention after 3 days.

Mix, cover, wait for organic matter to naturally breakdown in 3 months.

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