



TRI-COUNTY Electric Cooperative, Inc.

" A Commitment to Service and Savings "



The Home Garden A Resource for Exercise, Entertainment and Great Vegetables!

Home gardening doesn't require a lot of space. Many gardeners have great success with potted vegetables sitting on the front porch of their apartment. A small raised bed no larger than 10 ft. X 12 ft. can provide enough food, work, and exercise for a family of four. Planning is one of the most important ingredients for success. It's recommended that you start off small, so avoid renting a large rototiller and plowing up most of the back yard.

In Texas, most gardens will require water to survive, so make sure the site has water easily available. It can be very difficult to water vegetables when water must be carried in by the barrel and applied by hand.

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A perimeter curb will frame your garden and also help build a barrier to keep grass from working its way back into the garden. If you have an animal problem in the neighborhood, a short rabbit fence will protect maturing vegetables.

If you are lucky enough to have a yard full of good soil that's easy to turn, then simply removing the surface layer of grass will get things going. Add some compost and fertilizer and turn it into the soil by hand or use a rototiller to really mix things up well. The tiller can be purchased, rented or borrowed; that is pretty much your choice. I know I have to go looking for my tiller every spring, and I suspect most tiller owners have similar experiences.



If your ideal soil conditions are less than perfect, it would be a good investment to bring in some planting soil. It can be purchased by the truckload or by the bag at most gardening centers. Getting a garden off to a good start requires a lot of preparation but in the end it will yield years of high quality vegetables. The following years will be a little easier on the back.

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What you plant is mostly up to you and what you enjoy eating. Onions, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, squash, green beans, okra, spinach, cucumbers, leaf lettuce, peas, carrots, radishes, peppers, spinach, and corn all do well in the Tri-County service area. Placing a wire cage around your tomato plants will keep the vines suspended off the ground and increase the production. As the plants grow simply coax them through the cage. Squash and cucumbers can also be coaxed to grow up on a wire fence inside the garden. This frees up surface area and makes a small garden much more productive. Use fencing wire with an opening large enough to slide your hand through, this will make harvesting easier as the plants mature.

You can keep your garden productive through the hot summer by rigging some shade to protect plants. Most hardware centers have screening material that filters out some but not all of the hot sun. It will help maintain proper moisture levels and keep plants from going into heat stress caused by direct sunlight. It also makes the gardening a little easier for the gardener.

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Enjoy your garden and if you have more than you need, remember to share with friends and neighbors.

April 2008 Member Information Bulletin

Get Ready to Start Those Engines ...



The warmer weather brings the urge to get started on lawn and gardening care. Unfortunately, thousands of people a year are injured by improper use of gardening tools. The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) has some safety reminders before taking on Mother Nature.

Carefully read the instructions on your lawn and garden products before using them. Lawn mowers and other lawn and garden equipment with sharp blades and fast moving parts can cause serious injury by cutting off a finger or a toe. Never remove the guards.

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If you are digging near the home, make sure you know the location of underground utility lines on your property. That way you can safely plant your foliage without the risk of electrocution. If you are not sure where power lines are located, contact 1-800-DIG-TESS at least 48 hours before you plan to work. They will notify all utilities in your neighborhood and the lines will be located.

When working on a ladder by the house, be aware of any overhead power lines. If you have a metal ladder, stay well away from the lines; the metal ladder will conduct electricity.

Electric outdoor tools should not be operated in the rain or in wet conditions.

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Make sure your extension cords are rated for outdoor use and in good condition. Inspect the power tools and mower for frayed power cords, broken plugs and cracked or broken housing. If the product is damaged, stop use immediately and repair it or replace it.

Keep children well away from lawn mowers and other equipment, which can throw objects such as rocks and sticks. Never leave the mower unattended while running and don't allow young children or inexperienced people to operate the mower.

Equipment like post hole diggers, lawn mowers, mulchers, tillers, thatchers and leaf blowers have moving parts that can cut, burn, even blind when directions are not followed. When they become blocked, unplug the appliance (or turn off the engine of a gasoline powered product) before trying to remove the obstruction. Try to use a long stick to clear the blockage, before using your hand. Even when the engine is off, blades can remain spring-charged, resulting in swift movement when the obstruction is cleared.

Before you mow the lawn be sure the area is clear of stones and twigs that might be thrown by blades. Don't try to cut wet grass or operate an electric mower in the rain. Never make adjustment to the wheel height or to the blade while the engine is running. Make sure the cord for electrical mowers is out of the cutting area. Be sure to wear hard-toed shoes to protect your feet. When mowing a hill, work your way across it and not up and down the slopes.

Keep safety first when you tackle your spring cleaning project and always consider the potential for injury when using power operated equipment. A few moments of caution can save a lifetime of regret.

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From The Cooperative Kitchen



This month's recipe was provided by Cheryl Markgraf from Azle. She will receive a Texas Co-Op Power Cookbook, compliments of TCEC.



QUICK BURRITOS



... INGREDIENTS ...

1 - Onion

1 - Pound of Hamburger Meat

1 - Can Ranch Style Beans

1 - Can of Corn

1 - Can of Diced Tomatoes

Brown hamburger meat and onion together and drain off liquid.

Add the ranch style beans, corn and diced tomato mix.

Pour over Fritos or eat on a flour tortilla.

This is a quick, low cost and filling meal for families on the go.

It Pays To Stay Informed!

Find your account number in our Member Information Bulletin and you will receive a \$20.00 credit on your electric bill. Simply contact one of the offices listed below and make them aware of your discovery.

It pays to stay informed!

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TRI-COUNTY
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