

Your Garden

Money-Saving Vegetable Gardening

(NAPSA)—Millions of us are buying seed packets or plants and heading to the backyard to plant our own vegetables. The reason? According to the National Gardening Association, it's all about creating better-tasting produce and saving money.

"Tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, beans and carrots are some of the most popular vegetables to grow in your backyard," said Lance Walheim, co-author of the "Sunset Vegetable Gardening" book and gardening expert for Bayer Advanced™. "Homegrown veggies taste great and you'll save hundreds of dollars a year."

Walheim has a few tips for successful vegetable gardening:

- **Choose the easiest veggies to grow.** Tomatoes, radishes, zucchini, carrots, peas, peppers and lettuce will help make your first attempt at vegetable gardening successful.

- **Choose the sunniest spot.** Vegetables need up to eight hours of direct sunlight in rich, well-drained soil. Start with a 6' x 10' plot to keep the size manageable. Use string to mark off rows running east to west for the best sun exposure.

- **Plant at the right time.** Your local county extension service can help guide you on what to plant and when.

- **Control destructive pests.** Aphids, mites, leafhoppers and mealybugs are the kinds of pests



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that eat veggies. Bayer Advanced™ Natria Multi-Insect Control kills harmful insects on contact and it's made with canola oil. It's for organic gardening (www.BayerAdvanced.com). Always read and follow label directions.

- **Deep, infrequent watering is key:** Stick your finger in the soil. If it's dry, then water. One inch of water will wet sandy soil a foot deep and clay soil about five inches deep.

- **Organic mulch helps keep the weeds out.** It also decomposes, feeds the plants and keeps the soil loose and cool.

- **Feed your veggies.** Apply nitrogen fertilizer regularly, especially when they're young.

You might consider sharing your great-tasting veggies with your neighbors. If they become interested in gardening, you can pool your resources, create your own neighborhood food co-op and save even more money.