

### Flora & Fauna

#### Indoor Vegetable Sprout Patch

Looking for a creative way to add a few more vegetables to your diet? It can be a hassle to go to the grocery store and maintaining a large vegetable garden just isn't an option for people in apartments or those who lack a green thumb. But just about anyone can grow an indoor vegetable sprout patch that will yield some delicious little veggies in just a few days! This project is great for people who love to garden but have no space, and as a learning project for kids, who will love the quick results.

To grow sprouts, you'll need a variety of seeds such as alfalfa, broccoli, chia, radish, wheat grass or clover, a shallow dish or bowl, napkins or paper towels, a cookie cutter, and some water. You don't need to soil with this project, so all the dirt can stay outside!

Put a heaping tablespoon of seeds in a shallow dish or bowl, fill with water and soak the seeds overnight.

Place a folded paper towel or napkin on a plate and position the cookie cutter in the center of the paper.

Scoop the soaked seeds out of the water and deposit them in the middle of the cookie cutter. Spread out the wet seeds until they fill in the shape. You don't want the seeds to build up too thickly in any spot. They will take longer to sprout and grow raggedy and out of control.

Make a nice even layer and then gently remove the cookie cutter.

Do not pour water directly on the design. Ladle water in carefully with a spoon or spritz seeds with a spray bottle twice a day. You will see growth in about two days. Keep it in a cool, dark space (such as inside a cabinet). The sprouts should be ready to harvest in five days.

To go even greener with this project - use a recycled milk carton instead of a bowl or dish. Just cut the carton down to the bottom until it is about two to three inches tall. Line with a paper towel and proceed as above, with soaked seeds. Sprouts make a great addition to a sandwich, salad, soup or as a yummy garnish on your dinner plate. Sprouts are one of the most complete and nutritional foods that exist. They are rich with vitamins, minerals, proteins and enzymes.

You can put the sprouts in the fridge for later and they will keep growing and their vitamin content will actually increase! Compare this with store-bought vegetables and fruits, which start losing their vitamin content as soon as they're picked and often have to be shipped a thousand miles or more in winter. Depending on what you grow, you can get away with spending 25 cents for a pound of fresh sprouted, indoor-grown organic greens. No pesticides are needed; no fuel is used to bring the sprouts to your local store. Now that's economically and environmentally friendly!

### GUARANTEE SYSTEM.

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#### Household Tip: Establish a Cleaning Routine!

You won't find a magic solution to keeping a clean, well-maintained and organized home. But if you create a routine that works for your lifestyle and cleanliness requirements, you can stay on top of cleaning. Here's a few helpful suggestions:

**Daily Chores:** Perform these basic chores every day: make the beds, put away clothes and children's toys, wash dishes, spray and wipe off counters and cook top or range, take out the trash and recycling, clean cat litter boxes, wipe out bathroom sinks and spray shower doors.

**Weekly Chores:** laundry, ironing and dry-cleaning delivery and pick up, dust furniture, vacuum floors, clean the kitchen and bathrooms, shake or vacuum area rugs, mop hard surface (not wood) floors, change bed linens, sweep front entry and steps, buy groceries.

**Every Two Weeks:** sweep the garage, shake out area rugs and doormats outdoors before vacuuming, vacuum furniture (underneath the cushions, too!).

**Monthly:** clean the interior of the refrigerator, clean inside window surfaces, clean decorative mirrors, wash out kitchen trash container and surrounding area, clean baseboards, dust mini-blinds, and vacuum curtains, change or clean filters on heating and cooling systems.

## January

- 404 Last gladiator competition ever staged in the Rome Coliseum
- 1772 First traveler's check is issued in England
- 1880 Building of the Panama Canal begins
- 1902 First bowl game played - the Rose Bowl
- 1908 First ball dropped over NYC's Times Square to celebrate the New Year
- 1934 The Federal Depository Insurance Corp. was founded to insure money in US banks
- 1954 First bowl games televised (Rose Bowl and Cotton Bowl)
- 1960 Johnny Cash played his first concert behind prison walls
- 1995 Gary Larson announces the end of his 15-year-old cartoon series "Far Side"

# Fire & Smoke Damage

The following Emergency Tips were compiled by members and staff of the National Institute of Disaster Restoration, based on their wide experience of various types of damage. It is not likely that your situation will require all of these procedures, so apply those which common sense indicates are appropriate.

After fire damage it is natural to want to jump right in and clean the building and contents. Timely action can be a great help, but incorrect action can jeopardize or impede satisfactory restoration.

## DO...

- Clean and protect chrome trim on faucets and other brightwork by washing with detergent and applying a coating of Vaseline or oil
- Blow off or brush-vacuum loose smoke particles from upholstery, draperies and carpeting
- Open windows for ventilation if weather permits.
- Empty refrigerators and freezers if electricity is shut off, and prop doors open with a rolled towel or newspaper to allow air circulation.
- Pour antifreeze in toilet bowls, tanks, sink and tub drains to prevent freeze damage if heat is off in winter
- Call a plumber to drain and blow out all water lines if heat is off in winter.
- Remove pets to a clean environment if heavy fire residues are present.
- Send a sample group of garments for cleaning and deodorization in order to observe the results.
- Retain a contractor to board up open windows, roofs, or other penetrations in order to prevent additional damage.

## DO NOT...

- Wipe or attempt to wash fire residues from walls, ceilings or other absorbent surfaces.
- Use carpeting or upholstered furniture impacted by heavy residues or debris.
- Use food items or canned goods exposed to heat.
- Turn on computers, TV's, stereos or electrical appliances until they have been cleaned and checked

## Raising Children with Character

Raising good children--children of character--demands time and attention. While having children may be "doing what comes naturally," being a good parent is much more complicated. Here are ten tips to help your children build sturdy characters:

- 1. Put parenting first.** This is hard to do in a world with so many competing demands. Good parents consciously plan and devote time to parenting. They make developing their children's character their top priority.
- 2. Review how you spend the hours and days of your week.** Think about the amount of time your children spend with you. Plan how you can weave your children into your social life and knit yourself into their lives.
- 3. Be a good example.** Face it: human beings learn primarily through modeling. In fact, you can't avoid being an example to your children, whether good or bad. Being a good example, then, is probably your most important job.
- 4. Develop an ear and an eye for what your children are absorbing.** Children are like sponges. Much of what they take in has to do with moral values and character. Books, songs, TV, the Internet and films are continually delivering messages—moral and immoral—to our children. As parents we must control the flow of ideas and images that are influencing our children.
- 5. Use the language of character.** Children cannot develop a moral compass unless people around them use the clear, sharp language of right and wrong.
- 6. Punish with a loving heart.** Today, punishment has a bad reputation. But the fact of the matter is children need limits, and they will ignore these limits on occasion. Reasonable punishment is one of the ways human beings have always learned. Children must understand that punishment is a source of parental love.
- 7. Learn to listen to your children.** It is easy for us to tune out the talk of our children. One of the greatest things we can do for them is to take them seriously and set aside time to listen.
- 8. Get deeply involved in your child's school life.** School is the main event in the lives of our children. Their experience there is a mixed bag of triumphs and disappointments. How they deal with them will influence the course of their lives. Helping our children become good students is another name for helping them acquire strong character.
- 9. Make a big deal out of the family meal.** One of the most dangerous trends in America is the extinction of the family meal. The dinner table is not only a place of sustenance and family business but also a place for the teaching and passing on of our values. Manners and rules are subtly absorbed over the table. Family mealtime should communicate and sustain ideals that children will draw on throughout their lives.
- 10. Do not reduce character education to words alone.** We gain virtue through practice. Parents should help children by promoting moral action through self-discipline, good work habits, kind and considerate behavior to others and community service. The bottom line in character development is behavior--their behavior.

As parents, we want our children to be the architects of their own character, while we accept the responsibility to be architects of their environment—physical and moral. We need to create an environment in which our children can develop habits of honesty, generosity, and a sense of justice. For most of us, the greatest opportunity we personally have to deepen our own character is through the daily blood, sweat and tears of struggling to be good parents.

Serves 1

This recipe is perfect for anyone watching their figure. Since we don't get as much physical activity during the winter months and the holidays tend to pack on a few extra pounds, a simple, healthy meal is a great way jump start that New Year's resolution.

### Ingredients:

1 whole-wheat tortilla  
1/2 cup hummus  
1 handful spinach leaves, washed  
3 ounces grilled chicken, sliced or chopped (can be substituted with baked or gilled tofu for a vegetarian alternative)  
1/2 cup shredded carrots

### Preparation:

Assemble the wrap and enjoy!

A majority of Americans will make a resolution to lose weight, eat healthy or exercise more this year. A majority of them will fall short of those goals.

To make sure you don't fizzle out on your New Year's resolution, make sure you set attainable goals each week. Don't plan on working out 7 days a week if you currently struggle to visit the gym even once. Be realistic, be patient and be persistent and you will see success!



## Use Feng Shui and Colors to Bring Peace to Your Home

Have you ever wondered why certain colors evoke different emotions? A bright red rose? A blue violet? A white lily? Each flower reflects a different color, causing it to have a unique hue that affects you in different ways. Feng Shui uses this natural magic of colors to transform your life and create a balance between your **yin and yang energies**.

Yin energy is the passive energy. Yin energies have an element of dreaminess about them. If your home office is full of creative and dream-inducing objects or colors, Feng Shui may call for you to get rid of some of them and use more vibrant colors in their place. Yang energy is active and energetic. Yang colors will help you get in the right spirit to do some work and be enthusiastic.

**Yin Colors** are the colors that bring about healing and relaxation.

**Blue:** Blue is calm and soothing. This color reflects love as it heals and relaxes. Blue creates a feeling of peace and trust. Since it is the color of the sea and sky, Feng Shui associates it with adventure and exploration. Navy blue is the color of intellect and wisdom.

**Black:** Black symbolizes money and income. Black is great for careers, especially when combined with metal. It is the color of emotional protection and power.

**Purple:** Purple, the color that lies at the end of the spectrum, has a great significance in Feng Shui. The color is excellent for physical and mental healing and Feng Shui associates it with spiritual awareness.

**White:** White represents poise, confidence and purity. Because of its yin energy, Feng Shui uses this color mostly in combination with gold or silver to generate a calm atmosphere.

The other yin colors of Feng Shui are pink and green. These colors also have their individual properties that are used in Feng Shui practice.

**Yang Colors** are the colors that provide you the enthusiasm or the positive energy required to do something or be motivated.

**Yellow:** Yellow is considered to be as auspicious as red. Yellow represents sunbeams, warmth, motion, cheerfulness and friendliness. However, prolonged exposure to large amounts of intense yellow can cause anxiety.

**Orange:** Orange has great significance for Feng Shui practice as it strengthens your concentration. You might use this color when your creative well runs dry. Orange is used to give you a sense of purpose. Orange is the color of organization.

The other yang colors of Feng Shui are Tan/Beige, Brown, Red, Mauve, Maroon and lavender and gold. Each color has its significance such as money, luck or romance.

Feng Shui is about balance and harmony, not excess. You don't have to paint an entire room in your home bright orange or sky blue to gain the benefits of Feng Shui. Consider introducing a few decorative pillows or objects here or there. A simple, blue pillow may be all you need to evoke a sense of calm and peace!

## New Year's Resolutions for Your Pets

Since Rover and Fluffy can't make resolutions to eat healthier and exercise more, you have to take charge and help them live the healthier lives they deserve.

"Obesity is a very significant problem in both dogs and cats," says veterinarian Scott Alan Brown, head of the small animal medicine department at the University of Georgia in Athens. "We see large numbers of domesticated pets being fed very high quality food and living very sedentary lifestyles with very limited exercise," says Brown. "Quite honestly, it's analogous to what we see in the pet owners."

Sluggish metabolism, inactivity and overeating not only add pounds but also take a health toll: Hefty dogs and fat cats are at an increased risk for Type 2 diabetes, arthritis and cancer. They frequently develop weight-related behavior problems, too. Mentally unchallenged and physically inactive pets become very bored so they act out with excessive barking, more anxiety and destruction.

Veterinarians say owners need to learn to monitor their pets' weight -- by sight, by touch and with weigh-ins four to six times per year.

Working with your veterinarian, aim for a safe but slow 1 to 2 percent weight loss per week. (It's especially important not to cut back suddenly on a cat's food, since doing so can produce a serious, and often fatal, liver problem.)

Regular exercise is also key to help cats and dogs maintain a healthy weight or lose extra pounds. Dogs need to be walked at least 15 minutes, twice a day. Proceed gradually, however, in increasing physical activity for a dog that is middle-aged, sedentary or overweight. "The y can become lame or sore, just like people," Brown says.

Getting fat cats to be active can be more challenging. Providing toys and attention can help immensely. The important thing is to simply get active. Sage advice for pet owners, too.

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**Inside this issue you'll find:**

- Grow an Indoor Vegetable Sprout Patch
- Household Tip: Establish a Cleaning Routine
- What to do in case of Fire & Smoke Damage
- Raising Kids with Character
- Healthy Chicken Wrap
- Colors and Feng Shui in Your Home
- New Year's Resolutions for Pets
- January Money-Saving Special

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