

A Potager at Your Door

Create a European style kitchen garden; it's one-stop shopping where you can harvest your meals as well as a gorgeous bouquet for the table.

By Amy Grisak

Photo by Amy Grisak

[Click here](#) for a list of vegetables and herbs to include in your potager.

Kitchen gardens have been commonplace for generations.

These “potagers” – derived from the French word meaning a soup of broth and vegetables – marries form and function in an aesthetic garden that has all the ingredients for dinner at your fingertips.

Potagers traditionally are filled with herbs and vegetables, but their unique style also has room for flowers making it truly one-stop shopping where you can harvest your meals as well as a gorgeous bouquet for the table.

Blooms at Hand

Other benefits to adding flowers to the design are the extra blooms that attract pollinators, which is critical for successful crops, plus, some of the blossoms are equally delicious in salads.

Plant bee balm, nasturtiums and borage (which bees adore) to brighten up your greens and bring in the bees.

If possible, keep the potager convenient to the kitchen.

It's wonderful to be able to pop out in your bare feet and pajamas to harvest for breakfast instead of having to be properly dressed!

If you're growing your garden in containers, this can be easy to do since they can be kept close at hand on the porch or patio.

A Style for Your Potager

The style of the garden is completely up to you, although the typical European and early homesteading kitchen garden was often a four-square design.

This makes it easy to rotate crops, segregate perennial herb varieties and fence the area to discourage wildlife harvesting before you do.

Whether you opt for the classic four-square, planting in beds optimizes space and efficiency. Keep them 4-feet wide at the most so you can reach the middle for harvesting or weeding from either side, and create comfortable sized pathways in between to allow you to maneuver a wheelbarrow or cart.

Planning Crops

Because the potager isn't meant to grow an enormous quantity of crops like a field garden, making the most out of the space is a concern.

Plan the garden to grow successive crops throughout the season.

For instance, you can grow lettuce and spinach in an area early in the spring, but once the heat of late spring arrives pull them to make room for peppers or another heat-loving variety. When the summer vegetables wane, pull them and plant for a fall harvest.

Look at your kitchen garden as a three season effort instead of planting in the spring and letting it go.

A potager is an easy garden for anyone to grow. Plant what you like to eat, keep it simple and keep it close for a convenient way to enjoy the freshest produce around.

About the Author: Amy Grisak is a freelance writer in Montana. She's played in the garden for more than 25 years.