

Real Estate

MARKETPLACE

How Does Your Garden Grow?

By MELISSA FISHER

for Real Estate Marketplace

It may look like winter out there, but when it comes to gardening, spring is right around the corner. It's the time of year when Missoula's gardeners are starting to plan for the summer's crops.

Those with home gardens should start thinking now about what seeds to buy, and when to plant. Local landscaping and garden supply stores are stocking up for spring, and now is a great time to begin planning. Home gardens can range from low-to-high-maintenance, in sunshine or shade, producing enough food for one or for everyone on the block. Late winter is also a great time to get an early start on new plants in indoor pots, such as herbs or tomatoes, and then transfer them to outdoor gardens when spring arrives.

For those without much outdoor home garden space, there are plenty of alternatives. Garden City Harvest operates seven community gardens throughout town where people can "rent" plots to

Missoula area has several Community Supported Agriculture Farms, or CSAs, which allow people to purchase portions of a farm's harvest each week. This model helps provide stable income to farmers and fresh seasonal healthy food to community members.

Tracy Potter-Finn and Margaret DeBona know a thing or two about gardening. The two have years of experience working on farms, share a passion for taking care of the land, and have recently started their own CSA. At their home in Missoula's Northside, they plan to grow a variety of fresh and drying flowers, sweet potatoes, and strawberries. They also feed garden and kitchen scraps to their small flock of chickens. Meanwhile, at their County Rail Farm, LLC in Dixon, they will harvest sustainable and organic produce for those who purchase farm shares.

While the two take great pride in providing food for their Missoula neighbors, they definitely encourage everyone to give gardening a try. "People shouldn't be afraid to jump in and go for it," says

It's an affordable way to provide healthy food, less expensive than buying all your fruits and vegetables at grocery stores. "People have a chance to try new vegetables and cook new dishes. Starting your own garden or participating in a CSA can literally change the way you eat," says DeBona.

"There are so many great resources for local farmers and gardeners - beginners and experts alike - in Missoula" says DeBona. "People are so encouraging and welcoming here."

One of those resources is the Missoula Urban Demonstration Project, or MUD, dedicated to providing Missoulians with hands-on experiences through workshops to increase self-reliance. MUD teaches start-to-finish gardening courses, and offers a Tool Library, where a variety of shared tools can be checked out for a very small fee. This great resource helps to make home gardening even more affordable and accessible.



Missoula has many resources for those looking

Real Estate
marketplace

By the numbers

dens should start thinking now about what seeds to buy, and when to plant. Local landscaping and garden supply stores are stocking up for spring, and now is a great time to begin planning. Home gardens can range from low-to-high-maintenance, in scrubline or shade, producing enough food for one or for everyone on the block. Late winter is also a great time to get an early start on new plants in indoor pots, such as herbs or tomatoes, and then transfer them to outdoor gardens when spring arrives.

For those without much outdoor home garden space, there are plenty of alternatives. Garden City Harvest operates seven community gardens throughout town where people can "rent" plots to grow their own vegetables. Volunteers are also welcome to work in the gardens, earning vegetables in exchange for a few hours' work. Applications for 2011 Garden City Harvest plots are due March 21.

People who don't have that "green thumb" have plenty of options, too. The

Tracy Potter-Finn and Margaret DeBona know a thing or two about gardening. The two have years of experience working on farms, share a passion for taking care of the land, and have recently started their own CSA. At their home in Missoula's Northside, they plan to grow a variety of fresh and drying flowers, sweet potatoes, and strawberries. They also feed garden and kitchen scraps to their small flock of chickens. Meanwhile, at their County Rail Farm, LLC in Dixon, they will harvest sustainable and organic produce for those who purchase farm shares.

While the two take great pride in providing food for their Missoula neighbors, they definitely encourage everyone to give gardening a try. "People shouldn't be afraid to jump in and go for it," says Potter-Finn. "If it doesn't work out, the worst that can happen is you'll spend quality time outside in your garden and end up with a big compost pile, which is the first step to great soil!"

The advantages to growing and eating local produce are countless.

"There are so many great resources for local farmers and gardeners - beginners and experts alike - in Missoula" says DeBona. "People are so encouraging and welcoming here."

One of those resources is the Missoula Urban Demonstration Project, or MUD, dedicated to providing Missoulians with hands-on experiences through workshops to increase self-reliance. MUD teaches start-to-finish gardening courses, and offers a Tool Library, where a variety of shared tools can be checked out for a very small fee. This great resource helps to make home gardening even more affordable and accessible.

With all of these gardening options, and so many enthusiasts growing and supporting local food, it's no wonder Missoula is known as the Garden City.

Melissa Fisher is a freelance writer for the Missoulian Advertising Department.



Missoula has many resources for those local

Real Estate

marketplace

By the numbers

262 Number of Homes on MissoulaHomeSeller.com Under \$200,000

100 Number of Featured Rental Listings on MissoulaRentalFinder.com

29 Number of Virtual Tours Currently on Missoulian.com

- Missoula Urban Demonstration Project, or MUD, teaches start-to-finish gardening courses, and offers a Tool Library, where a variety of shared tools can be checked out for a very small fee.

Today.

Home sales trends in Missoula

Fourth Quarter October 1, 2010 - December 31, 2010
Residential Market Activity in the Missoula Urban Area
(including, AND including with stream)

NUMBER OF SALES

Year	# of Sales
2010	154
2009	210

MEDIAN PRICE

Come Home to PLEASANT VIEW



\$196,900 • 1306 sq ft

Julie Gar

Listing Real Estate
532-93

eamily Eng
Real Estate



J
A 20