

## EXTENSION NOTES



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### **Bring Your Garden Inside**

If the thought of facing a long winter without straight-from-the-garden freshness makes you sad, weep no more. It's easy as tomato pie to grow your own produce indoors.

There are a number of indoor gardening systems on the market today. They range in price and require anything from 2 square feet in space all the way to a multi-tiered 5-foot wide rack of shelving and grow lights. But if you don't have the money or space to invest in one of these systems, don't worry. There's plenty you can do without them.

The biggest challenge people usually face when growing plants indoors is light. Some plants, like tomatoes, which can be grown in a pot indoors, require close to 10 hours of light a day. You might not be able to get that much light relying on windows alone. However, if you have a table or deep windowsill, you can position a grow light over your plants. Grow lights are bright, wide-spectrum lights that approximate sunlight. They come in all price ranges and styles, from desktop to hanging versions. You can also use a full-spectrum fluorescent light if you have a fixture nearby. There are also LED plant lights that are a bit more expensive but use less electricity than fluorescent lights. Incandescent bulbs do not emit the right spectrum of light for plant growth.

Containers should have proper drainage. Greens and some herbs only need a few inches of depth, while tomatoes will require a 12-inch deep pot. Use potting soil, which has better drainage, rather than garden soil.

Here are some easy plants to consider growing indoors this winter:

- Scallions and garlic greens - For scallions, also known as green onions, you can cut off the tip with the roots and place it in a glass with about an inch of water. When the roots are 2 or 3 inches long, plant them in potting soil in a shallow container. You can either harvest the green tops and let the plant continue to grow or use the entire green onion. For garlic greens, plant a garlic clove in a few inches of potting soil mix. You won't be able to grow bulbs, but the green portion tastes garlicky and serves as a good substitute, either raw or sauteed.
- Carrots - Small carrots are easy to grow in potting soil. Sprinkle the seeds on top of the soil in a pot or long window box, lightly cover with damp peat moss and water well. And don't throw away those carrot tops. They're edible and nutritious and can be used in soups and sauces and even smoothies.
- Salad greens - Spread the seeds across the top of a 2-inch to 4-inch deep container filled with potting soil. Lightly press them into the soil and mist to keep the seeds moist. Wait until the leaves are at least 4 inches long and then harvest the leaves starting from the outside of the plant. These plants will keep

producing all season long, if you harvest them leaf by leaf.

- Herbs - Basil, chives and parsley are extremely easy to grow indoors. Parsley demands more humidity, so misting the plants will help them flourish. Use an organic fertilizer to help your herbs reach their full potential.

For more information about indoor gardening, contact your Carter County Cooperative Extension Service. Educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expressions, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

#### **Upcoming Events:**

- **Little Sandy Beekeepers** - Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 PM – Topic: Catching Swarms
- **Ag Advancement Council** – Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 PM
- **Extension Council & District Board Meetings** - Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00 AM