

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

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Gardening Vertically

Do you find you don't have enough landscaping place to get in the number of garden plants you would like? Well, then let's talk about taking things to the next level...literally. Many crops can be grown vertically, including the more traditional tomatoes, pole beans, and peas as well as vining crops such as cucumbers, melons, squash and gourds.

Elevating plants off the ground increases the air flow which can help prevent disease. Bringing the height of the produce up also makes harvesting easier for those of us with stiff backs. Edible-pod and snow peas are recommended because those crops have longer vines and are therefore more appropriate for growing vertically than English (shelling) peas.

Bush-type vining crops produce short vines and are consequently less suitable for vertical growth. Be mindful of crops that grow large fruit as they could damage the vine if grown vertically. Supporting your vertical garden with a sturdy structure is also important. One suggestion is bamboo poles.

Create a pup tent or A-frame structure by leaning two cattle panels or pallets together and securing them at the top. Alternatively, a single panel can be tied upright to T-posts for support. Plant vining crops at the base and train them to grow upward. The weather has been pretty nice lately. Happy gardening!

Information comes from Kansas State University horticulture expert, Cynthia Domenghini.