

Gardening encourages healthy eating

The garden planning and seed selection process can be a fun exercise for families looking for new activities that encourage physical activity, time outdoors, science inquiry, and healthy eating. That's right—healthy eating. Research has shown that when children help choose which vegetables to grow in a garden, they have a greater tendency to eat increased amounts of those vegetables. So, if you plan to sow some seeds for a garden this year and have children, enlist their help in making seed selections. If you had a garden last year, ask your children what vegetables they liked the most and try a new variety of that fruit or vegetable.

Once you get your seeds, be sure to keep them in a cool, dark, dry location until you are ready to plant them. The produce drawer in the refrigerator can be a perfect place.

If you plan to start some seeds indoors this winter, follow the seed packet instructions to determine when to start sowing seeds indoors. You will need a dedicated light source or a south facing window so your seedlings don't get spindly. Choose a location that is easy for you to monitor for soil moisture levels too. Seedlings have low tolerance for drought. Ready, set, sow!