



Thank you for being a part of NIMA's Spring 2021 Tote Program

Food security is very important for strengthening our community. The COVID-19 pandemic has only increased the importance of growing our own food, connecting with our traditional food harvesting ways and connecting with each other to build a resilient Métis nation here on northern Vancouver Island.

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Items in the totes were purchased from Art Knapp (Courtenay), Good Earth Farms (Black Creek), Canadian Tire (Campbell River) and ShopRite (Port McNeill).



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Tips and Tricks for Your Garden

Did you know that tomatoes and basil have deep roots? Make sure you plant them in a pot that is tall to allow for maximum growth.



Different plants have different root levels. When you are planning your garden, plant vegetables with different root depths next to each other so that they don't compete for resources.



Watering is best done in the morning. The cooler weather allows the water to soak in and it lowers the risk of fungus and other issues.

Try inter-planting your vegetables, herbs and flowers in your garden or patio containers. One plant can offer benefits to the other plants. Flowers will bring more pollinators to your plants. By using the companion planting chart, you can group specific plants together that will keep away destructive insects. Mixed planting also makes for less weeds because different plants use different nutrients. Lastly, combinations look more attractive and can smell wonderful.

Many different types of herbs can be grown on your window sill. Oregano, rosemary, basil, parsley, chives and sage will add beauty to your room and are useful in cooking. Many of these plants will grow cyclically, such as basil, so be prepared to replant them as they get older.

You can start your seeds early by using a seedling heat pad for quick germination. Full spectrum grow lights can also give your starter plants a boost.

Some vegetables benefit from early planting inside so that they are strong when they are moved outside after the frost. Plants that benefit from early starting inside are tomatoes, peppers, melons (like watermelon and honeydew) and cabbage.



When you get potting soil, remember to soak your soil with water first before you use it in your pots to avoid dehydration.



Plants need to be fertilized at different points in their lives. Research to find out what each plant needs and the best times to fertilize. This may be when they are transplanted, when they get their first true leaves or when they start to flower.