

# The Impact of Home and Community Gardening In America

Research Conducted By:

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## About the National Gardening Association

The National Gardening Association (NGA), founded in 1973, is a national nonprofit leader in plant-based education, respected for its award-winning Web sites and newsletters, grants and curricula for youth gardens, and research for the lawn and garden industry. NGA's mission is to advance the personal, community, and educational benefits of gardening by supporting gardeners and teachers with information and resources. To learn more, please visit [www.garden.org](http://www.garden.org).

## About The ScottsMiracle-Gro Company

With nearly \$3 billion in worldwide sales and more than 6,000 associates, The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, through its wholly-owned subsidiary, The Scotts Company LLC, is the world's largest marketer of branded consumer products for lawn and garden care, with products for professional horticulture as well. The Company's brands are the most recognized in the industry. In the U.S., the Company's Scotts®, Miracle-Gro®, Ortho® and Smith & Hawken brands are market-leading in their categories, as is the consumer Roundup® brand, which is marketed in North America and most of Europe exclusively by Scotts and owned by Monsanto. In the U.S, the Company operates Scotts LawnService®, the second largest residential lawn service business. In Europe, the Company's brands include Weedol®, Pathclear®, Evergreen®, Levington®, Miracle-Gro®, KB®, Fertiligene® and Substral®. For additional information, visit [www.scotts.com](http://www.scotts.com).

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

# The Impact of Home and Community Gardening In America

<b>About the National Gardening Association and ScottsMiracle-Gro.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2008 Food Gardening Participation and Spending.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Outlook for an Increase In Food Gardening In 2009.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Who Participates In Food Gardening?.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Why People Participate In Food Gardening.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Food Gardening Experience and Time Spent Gardening Each Week .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Location and Size of Food Gardens .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Home and Community Food Gardening Production and Value .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>The Most Popular Vegetables .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Interest In Community Gardening .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>School Gardening Awareness and Attitudes .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Attitudes about Gardening With Kids .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Methodology.....</b>	<b>17</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# The Impact of Home and Community Gardening In America

- **2008 Household Participation In Food Gardening:**  
31 percent of all U.S. households, or an estimated 36 million households, participated in food gardening in 2008. Food gardening includes growing vegetables, fruit, berries, and herbs.
- **2008 Average and Total \$ Spent On Food Gardening:**  
U.S. food gardening households spent an annual average of \$70 on food gardening and a total of \$2.5 billion in 2008.
- **2009 Food Gardening Outlook:**  
43 million U.S. households plan to grow their own fruits, vegetables, berries, and herbs in 2009—that's up 19 percent from 36 million households in 2008.
- **New Gardeners In 2009:**  
21 percent of food gardening households in 2009 will be new to gardening.
- **Garden Plans for 2009:**  
11 percent of households already active in food gardening plan to increase both the amount and variety of vegetables they will grow in 2009; 10 percent said they will spend more time food gardening this year.
- **Food Gardener Demographics:**  
Most food gardeners are women (54 percent); 45 years of age and older (68 percent); college graduates (43 percent); residents of the South (29 percent), Midwest (26 percent), West (23 percent), and Northeast (22 percent); in households with annual incomes of \$50,000 and over (49 percent); married households (64 percent); households with no children at home (67 percent); and two-person households (40 percent).
- **Reasons for Food Gardening:**  
The main reasons given by households for growing their own food include: for better-tasting food (58 percent), to save money on food bills (54 percent), for better quality food (51 percent), and to grow food they know is safe (48 percent). 34 percent of households said that the current recession is motivating them very much (14 percent) or a fair amount (20 percent).
- **Number of Years Food Gardening:**  
Today's food gardening households have gardened for an average of 12 years.
- **Hours Spent Food Gardening Each Week:**  
Food gardening households spend an average of 5 hours per week in the garden.
- **Food Garden Location:**  
33 million households have food gardens at home (91 percent); 2 million households have gardens at a friend, neighbor, or relative's home (5 percent); and 1 million households garden in a community garden plot (3 percent).
- **Food Garden Size:**  
The median food garden size is 96 square feet in area and the average food garden size is 600 square feet in area.

- **Food Garden Production and Value:**  
A well-maintained food garden can yield an estimated ½ pound of fresh produce per square foot of garden area. At in-season market prices that produce is worth \$2.00 per pound.
- **Most Popular Vegetables:**  
The most popular vegetables grown include tomatoes (86 percent), cucumbers (47 percent), sweet peppers (46 percent), beans (39 percent), carrots (34 percent), summer squash (32 percent), onions (32 percent), hot peppers (31 percent), lettuce (28 percent), and peas (24 percent).
- **Interest In Community Gardening:**  
An estimated 5 million households are extremely or very interested in having a garden plot in a community garden located near their home.
- **Awareness of and Opinions about School Gardening:**  
19 percent of all U.S. households said they were aware of gardening activities for students at their local school, while a majority of households (55 percent) believe gardening activities should be implemented whenever possible (35 percent) and in every school (20 percent).

## Number of Food-Gardening Households In 2008 and What They Spent

In total, 31 percent of all U.S. households, or an estimated 36 million households, participated in food gardening in 2008. Food gardening includes growing vegetables, fruit, berries, and herbs. Twenty-three percent participated in vegetable gardening followed by herb gardening (12 percent), fruit trees (10 percent), and growing berries (6 percent).

### 2008 Household Participation In Food Gardening

Food Gardening Activity	%	Millions
Vegetable Gardening .....	23	27
Fruit Trees .....	10	12
Growing Berries.....	6	7
Herb Gardening.....	12	14
TOTAL.....	31	36

The average spent on all types of food gardening in 2008 was \$70 per participating household. Vegetable gardening households spent an annual average of \$53. Households that planted or maintained fruit trees spent an average of \$61. Households that grew berries spent an average of \$29. And households that grew herbs spent an average of \$30.

### 2008 Average \$ Spent On Food Gardening

Food Gardening Activity	\$ Average
Vegetable Gardening .....	\$53
Fruit Trees .....	\$61
Growing Berries.....	\$29
Herb Gardening.....	\$30
AVERAGE .....	\$70

Food gardening households spent a total of \$2.5 billion in 2008. That includes \$1.4 billion spent on vegetable gardening, \$538 million spent on fruit trees, \$138 million spent on growing berries, and \$391 million spent on herb gardening.

### 2008 Total \$ Spent On Food Gardening

Food Gardening Activity	\$ Total (Millions)
Vegetable Gardening .....	\$1,402
Fruit Trees .....	\$538
Growing Berries.....	\$138
Herb Gardening.....	\$391
TOTAL.....	\$2,469

# The Outlook for Increased Participation In Food Gardening In 2009

In total, 37 percent of all U.S. households, or an estimated 43 million households, plan to grow vegetables, fruit, berries, or herbs in 2009 compared with 31 percent, or an estimated 36 million households, in 2008. That's an increase of 7 million households or 19 percent from 2008 to 2009.

Among households already active in food gardening, 11 percent plan to increase both the amount and variety of vegetables they will grow in 2009, and 10 percent plan to spend more time food gardening this year. Twenty-one percent of food gardening households in 2009 will be new gardeners.

## **Food Gardening Households' 2009 Plans**

<u>Food Gardening Activity</u>	<u>%</u>
Increase amount of vegetables .....	11
Increase variety of vegetables .....	11
Share vegetables with others .....	11
Preserve fruits and vegetables .....	10
Spend more time gardening .....	10
Increase size of vegetable garden .....	8
Spend more money .....	5
Start growing fruit or berries .....	4
Spend less money .....	2
Don't know .....	21

## **New Food Gardening Households' 2009 Plans**

<u>Food Gardening Activity</u>	<u>%</u>
Start growing herbs .....	11
Start vegetables in containers .....	10
Start a vegetable garden .....	5
Start growing fruit or berries .....	4
TOTAL .....	21

# Who Participates In Food Gardening?

The demographics of today's food gardening households include a broad cross-section of the U.S. population. There are few other outdoor activities where virtually every demographic group is so well represented, no matter what their age, education, income, marital status, household size, gender, or regional location.

Most food gardeners are women (54 percent); 45 years of age and older (68 percent); college graduates (43 percent); live in the South (29 percent), Midwest (26 percent), West (23 percent), and Northeast (22 percent); and live in households with annual incomes of \$50,000 and over (38%), married households (64%), households with no children at home (67%), and two-person households (40%).

## Food Gardener Demographics

<u>Gender</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Household Income</u>	<u>%</u>
Female .....	54	\$75,000 & over .....	22
Male.....	46	\$50-\$74,999 .....	16
		\$35-\$49,999 .....	24
<u>Age</u>	<u>%</u>	Under \$35,000.....	21
18 to 34 .....	21	Undesignated .....	17
35 to 44 .....	11		
45 to 54 .....	24	<u>Children in Home</u>	<u>%</u>
55 and over .....	44	Children in home .....	33
		No children in home.....	67
<u>Education</u>	<u>%</u>		
College Graduate .....	43	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>%</u>
Some College.....	36	Married .....	64
High School.....	21	Single.....	20
		Divorced/Widow.....	16
<u>Region</u>	<u>%</u>		
Northeast.....	22	<u>Household Size</u>	<u>%</u>
Midwest .....	26	One person.....	20
South .....	29	Two person.....	40
West .....	23	Three-four person.....	32
		Five or more persons.....	9



# Why People Participate In Food Gardening

Households today are growing their own food for a number of reasons: for better-tasting food (58 percent), to save money on food bills (54 percent), for better quality food (51 percent), and to grow food they know is safe (48 percent). A total of 34 percent of food gardening households say that the current recession or economic downturn has motivated them to grow food this year. When asked how much it has motivated them to grow vegetables, fruit, berries, or herbs this year, they responded “very much” (14 percent) or “a fair amount” (20 percent).

## Reasons for Food Gardening

<u>Reason</u>	<u>%</u>
To grow better tasting food .....	58
To save money on food bills .....	54
To grow better quality food.....	51
To grow food I know is safe .....	48
To feel more productive .....	40
To spend more time outdoors .....	35
To get back to basics .....	25
To have food to share with others .....	23
To live more locally .....	22
To have a family activity .....	21
To teach my kids about gardening .....	30
Other .....	9

## How much of a motivating factor is the current recession or economic downturn?

<u>Attitude</u>	<u>%</u>
Very much .....	14
Fair amount .....	20
Somewhat .....	28
Not at all .....	36
Don't know .....	3

# How Long People Have Had a Food Garden and How Much Time They Spend Gardening Each Week

On average, today's food gardening households have been growing food for nearly 12 years and they spend nearly 5 hours per week gardening.

## How many years have you been gardening?

<u>Years</u>	<u>%</u>
First year in 2009 .....	20
One to five years .....	39
Six to ten years .....	13
Eleven to 20 years .....	12
More than 20 years .....	15
Median .....	4 years
Average .....	11.9 years

## Time spent food gardening each week

<u>Hours per week</u>	<u>%</u>
Less than one hour .....	16
One to two hours .....	27
Three to five hours .....	30
Six to ten hours .....	15
Eleven to twenty hours .....	8
More than twenty hours .....	3
Average .....	4.9 hours

## Location and Size of Food Gardens

33 million households grow food at home (91 percent); 2 million households grow food at the home of a friend, neighbor or relative (5 percent); and 1 million households grow food in a community garden (3 percent). The median food garden size is 96 square feet in area and the average food garden size is 600 square feet in area.

### 2008 Food Garden Location

Food Garden Location	%	Millions
At home .....	91	33
At the home of a friend, neighbor, relative .....	5	2
In a community garden.....	3	1
Other .....	1	1
TOTAL.....	100	36

### Size of Food Gardens

Food Garden Size	%
100 sq. ft. or less .....	57%
101 to 500 sq. ft. ....	26%
501 to 2,000 sq. ft. ....	12%
More than 2000 sq. ft. ....	6%
Median size .....	96 sq. ft.
Average size .....	600 sq. ft.

### Food Gardening In Containers

About half of all food gardening households (48 percent) grow food in containers in addition to growing vegetables, fruit, berries, and herbs in the ground,

## Amount of Food Grown and the Gross Domestic Garden Product

A well-maintained food garden can yield an estimated  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of produce per square foot of garden area over the course of the growing season. At in-season market prices, this produce is worth \$2.00 per pound. The average 600-square-foot food garden can produce an estimated 300 pounds of fresh produce worth \$600 and a return of \$530 based on an average investment of \$70.

### Home Food-Gardening Production

- 36 million households
- 600 sq. ft. average food garden size
- Average yield of  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of fresh produce per sq. ft. of garden area
- 300 pounds total yield of a variety of popular vegetables

### Home Food-Gardening Value

- \$2 per pound at average, in-season produce prices
- \$600 estimated dollar return for a 600 sq. ft. food garden
- \$70 average food-gardening investment
- \$530 average food-gardening return on investment
- Total U.S. food gardening investment: \$2.5 billion
- Total return on U.S. food gardening investment: \$21 billion

## The Most Popular Vegetables

Among the many vegetables grown by home gardeners, the 10 most popular are: tomatoes (86 percent), cucumbers (47 percent), sweet peppers (46 percent), beans (39 percent), carrots (34 percent), summer squash (32 percent), onions (32 percent), hot peppers (31 percent), lettuce (28 percent), and peas (24 percent).

### Which of the following vegetables will you grow this year?

<u>Vegetable</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Vegetable</u>	<u>%</u>
Tomatoes .....	86	Spinach.....	15
Cucumbers .....	47	Broccoli.....	15
Sweet Peppers .....	46	Melon.....	15
Beans .....	39	Cabbage .....	14
Carrots.....	34	Beets .....	11
Summer Squash .....	32	Winter Squash .....	10
Onions .....	32	Asparagus .....	9
Hot Peppers .....	31	Collards .....	9
Lettuce .....	28	Cauliflower.....	7
Peas .....	24	Celery .....	5
Sweet Corn .....	23	Brussels sprouts.....	5
Radish .....	20	Leeks .....	3
Potatoes .....	18	Kale .....	3
Salad Greens .....	17	Parsnips.....	2
Pumpkins .....	17	Chinese cabbage.....	2
Watermelon.....	16	Rutabaga .....	1

# Interest In Community Gardening

Among households that don't currently participate in food gardening, 3 percent would be extremely interested and 4 percent would be very interested in having a plot in a community garden located near their home. That translates to an estimated 5 million households that would like to garden in a community garden in the future, compared to the 1 million households that are current community gardeners.

## How interested are you in having a community garden?

<u>Level of Interest</u>	<u>%</u>
Extremely interested .....	3
Very interested .....	4
Fairly interested.....	10
Somewhat interested .....	17
Not at all interested .....	51
Don't know .....	16

## Likelihood of Participating In Food Gardening In The Future

<u>Likelihood</u>	<u>%</u>
Extremely likely .....	1
Very likely .....	2
Fairly likely.....	6
Somewhat likely .....	18
Not at all likely .....	66
Don't know .....	8

## Awareness of and Interest In Providing Gardening Activities for Students In Schools

Nineteen percent of all U.S. households were aware of gardening activities for students at their local school. That contrasts with a majority of households (55 percent) that said gardening activities should be implemented whenever possible (35 percent), or should be implemented in every school (20 percent). In addition, 22 percent of households said that gardening activities should be offered as an extracurricular activity and 20 percent said gardening activities should be implemented in schools whenever convenient. Only 3 percent said that gardening activities should not be offered in schools at all.

### Does your school provide gardening activities for students?

Grade Level	%
Preschool .....	3
Elementary school.....	9
Middle school .....	5
High school .....	9
College .....	5
None of these .....	9
Don't know of any such programs at any level.....	72
Aware of gardening activities for students .....	19

### Opinions about providing school gardening activities for students

Opinion	%
Should be implemented in schools whenever possible.....	35
Should be offered as an extracurricular activity only.....	22
Should be implemented in every school .....	20
Should be implemented in schools whenever convenient .....	20
Should not be offered in schools at all .....	3

# Attitudes about Gardening With Kids

## Attitudes and opinions about gardening with kids

Attitude/Opinion	%
Teaching kids about gardening is good for the environment .....	48
Gardening is a good way to involve kids in experiential learning.....	42
I don't have children at home to garden with .....	40
Gardening engages children who may be hard to reach otherwise .....	24
I've found gardening with kids to be a very positive experience .....	20
Gardening with kids helps young minds develop .....	18
I don't know enough about gardening to do it with kids .....	16
Children who engage in gardening are better adjusted .....	16
I don't have enough contact with family or friend's kids to garden with them .....	16
I'm not involved in gardening with kids now, but would like to in the future .....	15
Children who engage in gardening tend to do better in school .....	14
I don't have the space for gardening with kids .....	12
I am currently involved in gardening with kids.....	9
I don't want to garden with kids.....	8
I don't have the time for gardening with kids.....	6
Kids aren't interested in gardening with me .....	4
I've tried gardening with kids in the past and it didn't work out .....	2



## METHODOLOGY

# The Impact of Home and Community Gardening In America

*The Impact of Home and Community Gardening In America* research study was conducted in January 2009 by Harris Interactive for the National Gardening Association. A representative sample of 2,559 households nationwide were surveyed using the following methodology:

### **Harris Interactive**

Harris Interactive is a leading market research firm, using Internet-based methodologies to provide its clients with information about the experiences and attitudes of people worldwide. Known for its Harris Poll, Harris Interactive has more than 40 years experience in providing its clients with market research, including custom research, multi-client research, and customer relationship services. Harris Interactive uses state-of-the-art proprietary technology to conduct Internet research from a multimillion-member database of online panelists.

The Harris Interactive panel is recruited from a wide variety of sources. Harris Interactive effectively uses this panel to conduct a variety of quantitative and qualitative consumer-based research.

### **Sampling Plan**

Stratified random samples are drawn from among the Harris Poll Online® database members by age, gender, and region based upon their known proportions in the U.S. adult (18+) population. Estimates of the general population proportions are obtained from the March supplement to the Current Population Surveys (CPS). The gender proportions are then adjusted to account for the differential response rates of men and women.

### **Weighting Methodology**

These results were weighted to the general U.S. adult (18+) household population based on known proportions among this population for education, age and gender, race/ethnicity, region, and income level.