



Ready to Get Organic?

By Lisa Smith

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If you're planning a vegetable garden, consider going organic. It's not as complicated as one might think.

Basically, [organic farming](http://www.infonet-biovision.org/res/res/files/488.OrgFarm.pdf) (<http://www.infonet-biovision.org/res/res/files/488.OrgFarm.pdf>) involves rotating your crops; using green manure, compost, and biological pest controls; and limiting the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and plant hormones.

Hold on! Don't throw in the gardening hoe and give up just yet. I'll explain what the above means.

Rotating your crop is simply moving your veggies every 3 to 4 years to a different location. Green manure (cover crops) is plants grown to improve the structure, organic matter content, and nutrient content of soil. Cover crops you can use in the Northeast in the summer are buckwheat, Japanese millet, and sorghum Sudan-grass. For cooler seasons use oats, rye, vetch, or a combination of all three. The advantages of green manure are that it improves soil fertility, controls soil erosion, increases and recycles plant nutrients, and prevents weed growth (in some cases strangling them. Doesn't that sound appealing?).

Do I really need to tell you how important compost is to a veggie garden? Alright, then, consider this: its cheap, it improves soil and crop quality, it reduces pests and disease, it allows soil to hold water better, and you can make it yourself. There are many different ways to make your own compost using indore, Bangalore, and heat process/Block methods, or theres pit, trench, and basket composting. You can mulch, another important component to organic gardening, using compost or manure, straw, or dry grass.

For pest control, look no further than the type of crops you plant. Choose crops with a natural resistance to pests and consider companion planting, which is planting certain crops with other crops that pests avoid such as onion or garlic.

Now, that doesnt sound too bad, right? Going green doesnt have to be painful and just think how much better those veggies will taste without those annoying chemicals in the way.

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