

It's that time of the year again. Warm weather, longer daylight hours, and that instinctual urge many of us have to start working in the soil and growing our own vegetables. There are several reasons that people decide to grow their own vegetables. Reasons range from saving money to eating healthier and everything in between. I enjoy growing my own vegetables so that I know how they have been treated from day one. What variety it is? What kind of fertilizer was used? And if there were any pesticides used and when? Those are important questions that I want to know the answer to so there is no better way of knowing than having my own garden.

When planning your vegetable garden one of the first things you need to do is select the best location. Most garden vegetables like full sun and need to be on a well-drained area for best growth. Soil preparation is next on the list. Whether it's in the ground or a raised bed, the soil has to be prepared. Break the soil up and incorporate fertilizer into the soil as you're breaking it up. Don't just randomly spread fertilizer into your garden. I'm surprised at times how we tend to just grab fertilizer by the handful and spread it out. I guess that's kind of like opening up prescription medicine and just dumping it down your throat. But anyway, soil testing is the best method of determining exactly what type and amounts of fertilizer we need. Soil tests can easily be done by the LSU AgCenter and have results back in the mail in as little as 7 days.

Plant the foods that you enjoy and your neighbors enjoy. A typical backyard garden can produce more vegetables in a short amount of time than you and your family can eat so there is always plenty to share with your neighbors.

Gardening is one of the most relaxing, stress releasing activities that you can do. But many times when something goes wrong it can add to the stress. So learn what you can about gardening and if you don't know something, look it up on the LSU AgCenter's website or give me a call at 318/251-5134 and I can help guide you through the growing season. We have many publications on gardening that you can browse through at my office. Feel free to come by and look through those publications and visit a little about your garden.