

Weekly Column for this week: 3-8-10  
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## Landscaping You Can Eat

Edible landscaping not only has the potential to add dimension and interest to your yard, it provides food for you as well as animals that wander through. It may seem like a piece of cake to grow fruits or nuts. Plant, water, and wait a while. There are, however many things that should be taken into consideration. The key is not just to get the plants to grow, but to get them to produce something that is actually edible.

Some edible plants may be vines such as the grape or a ground cover variety like the strawberry. There are also shrubs and bushes such as blackberries and gooseberries or trees such as the apple, cherry, or walnut. The size and space that would be needed for these plants when fully grown should be taken into consideration. This will help you avoid overcrowding or planting something in an area that causes problems in the future.

It is beneficial to know what areas are best for your edible landscaping. Some plants may prefer a certain type of soil or temperature range. You should not assume that all plants will require the same environment to grow well. It is also important to know if the plants you are growing are self-pollinators or need other varieties of plants to pollinate them.

If your edible plants are self-pollinating, then you can get by with planting one variety that will still produce. Examples of self-pollinating plants are apricot, blackberry and grapes. If your plants need to cross-pollinate, then they will not produce if other varieties of plants are not planted nearby. Examples of plants that cross pollinate are butternut, Chestnut, crabapple, and plum.

For more information on edible landscaping, you can visit the web at <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/HO-190.pdf>. You can also contact your Elkhart County Extension office at 574-533-0554 for more information.

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