

5 Garden Vegetables To Save You Money

Growing Certain Vegetables Can Cut Down On Grocery Store Bills

Money-Saving Veggies (Added: May 08, 2012)

Planting veggies in your garden can help save money on your grocery bill. But which plants are going to save you the most money? ([more](#))

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COLUMBUS, Ohio --

As the weather warms up, Central Ohioans are itching to get out in the garden. We're getting closer and closer to planting time for summer vegetables and annuals.

With budgets as tight as they are these days, many gardeners are thinking about planting vegetables in order to save money on their grocery bill.

"There's nothing that beats a home-grown tomato!" says Susan Zerby who was seedling shopping with her husband, Art, on Monday.

The Zerbys are planning to plant their first home garden in years. They say they enjoy gardening and they look forward to putting Susan's "famous tomato-and-onion recipe" to good use later in the season. Since they have specific plans for their veggies, they're being careful to pick varieties that they'll be certain to use.

"Food tastes better!" says Susan of home-grown veggies.

"It tastes better, I think," echoes Art. "And there's no pesticides on it."

In the process, the Zerbys will be saving money.

In a survey, the W. Atlee Burpee Company, one of the nation's largest seed retailers, claims that \$1 spent on seeds will yield up to \$25 in vegetables. Similarly, the Ball Corporation, Burpee's parent company and a retailer of canning equipment, claims that gardeners can save up to \$250 per growing season by canning the fresh produce and eating through the winter months.

"Vegetable growing is fun and it's all about saving money!" says George Kosko, a nursery manager at Oakland Nurseries in Columbus. He says he has seen an uptick in the number of people starting vegetable gardens in the past few years.

"There's a definite increase in it once the economy went down a little bit and people realized they needed to save some money," Kosko says.

HouseLogic.com crunched some numbers and suggests that a single tomato plant that produces fruit all summer can save you up to \$23 per plant instead of buying those tomatoes in the store. Each bell-pepper plant can save you up to \$12 for the season. You'll pocket up to \$7.50 per cucumber plant. And growing leaf lettuce can save you four bucks a week on your grocery bill.

NBC4's Saturday-morning Garden Guru Tom Wood also reminds us, you can save on more than just vegetables.

"I actually like to have a little herb garden. Some basil, oregano, maybe some chives. You can do some fennel," Wood suggests. "Even plant some lavender mixed in to get a little color and some scent."

Herbs are often expensive in the store, sometimes four dollars or more for a single packet. For just one, \$2 plant, you'll have fresh herbs all summer.

Experts recommend, however, that some veggies aren't worth spending the time, money or effort to grow yourself. In general, you can buy potatoes, celery, asparagus and onions cheaper in the store. However, if you want the more-expensive, specialty varieties, you might want to grow those yourself.

"If you like heirloom tomatoes which are special tomatoes with a special flavor," Kosko says,

"you can't find that in the store."

"If you think about it," adds **NBC4's** Tom Wood, "you're going out and picking it off the vine and then putting it in your mouth. It can't get any fresher than that!"