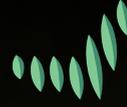




UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF CLIMATE CHANGE
& ENVIRONMENT



ازرع الإمارات
PLANT THE EMIRATES

LOCAL AGRICULTURE



Why Planting Produce and Supporting Local Agriculture Matters?

In today's fast-paced world, we often rely on imported foods that travel long distances before reaching our tables. However, growing and consuming locally produced foods has numerous benefits. By planting produce in our own gardens and supporting local agriculture, we can contribute to a healthier lifestyle, a cleaner environment, and a more sustainable community. This is particularly significant in the UAE, where the climate poses unique challenges to growing crops. But with the right planning, it's possible to cultivate a thriving garden, even in a desert environment.

Why Grow Your Own Produce?

1. Health Benefits:

Home-grown produce is fresher, more nutritious, and free from harmful pesticides and chemicals often found in commercially grown foods.

2. Environmental Impact:

Growing your own food reduces the need for transportation and packaging, cutting down on carbon emissions and waste.

3. Economic Advantages:

Purchasing locally produced food or growing your own is cost-effective in the long run, reducing the dependence on expensive imported products.

4. Educational Value:

Gardening is a great educational experience for both children and adults, teaching responsibility, patience, and a deep appreciation for nature.



The Benefits of Locally Grown Produce in the UAE



1. Supports Local Farmers:

Purchasing locally grown foods helps sustain UAE's agricultural industry, ensuring food security and supporting local businesses.



2. Adapts to Local Climate:

Local produce is better suited to the UAE's hot and arid climate, meaning less water usage and more sustainable growth practices



3. Seasonal Availability:

Local farms can provide a variety of seasonal crops that are fresher and richer in taste compared to imported ones.





Guidelines for Planting Produce in Your Garden in the UAE

Growing produce in the UAE can be rewarding, but it requires a thoughtful approach due to the region's unique climate and soil conditions. Follow these simple steps to get started:

1. Choose the Right Time to Plant:



WINTER

October to March

- The best time to plant in the UAE as temperatures are cooler and more favorable for growing most vegetables and fruits
- Avoid planting during the intense summer months (June to August) unless you have a shaded greenhouse vegetables and fruits



2. Select Suitable Crops for the UAE Climate:

Choose crops that is known to thrive in the UAE's climate and soil conditions:



Leafy Greens

Lettuce, spinach, and kale



Herbs

Mint, basil, thyme, parsley, and coriander



Root Vegetables

Radishes, carrots, and beets



Fruiting Vegetables

Tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and zucchini



Local Fruits

Dates, lemon, and pomegranates

3. Prepare the Soil Properly:



1. Soil Type:

Use well-drained soil rich in organic matter. You can buy potting soil or improve sandy soil by adding compost or organic fertilizers.



2. PH Balance:

Aim for a slightly acidic to neutral pH (6.0-7.0) for most vegetables.



3. Mulching:

Use mulch to retain moisture and prevent soil erosion.

4. Water Efficiently:

Water is a precious resource in the UAE, so it's important to adopt water-saving techniques:

- **Early Morning or Late Afternoon:** Water during these times to minimize evaporation.
- **Drip Irrigation:** Install drip irrigation systems to ensure water reaches the roots directly.
- **Soil Moisture:** Check soil moisture before watering; overwatering can damage the roots.



5. Use Shading and Protective Structures:



Use **shade nets** or **cloches** to protect young plants from harsh sunlight, especially during the hotter months



Build **windbreaks** around your garden if you are in an open area to protect plants from sand and strong winds

6. Start Small and Expand Gradually:

If you are new to gardening, start with a few easy-to-grow plants and gradually expand your garden as you gain experience and confidence. Begin with herbs or fast-growing vegetables like radishes and lettuce.

7. Monitor Pests and Plant Health:

Keep an eye out for pests like aphids or leaf miners, which can damage your crops. Use natural pest control methods like neem oil or plant companion flowers that repel pests.



Planting and supporting locally grown produce is a small but impactful way to contribute to the UAE's sustainability efforts. By growing your own vegetables and fruits, you not only ensure a healthier diet but also support local agriculture and reduce your environmental footprint. **With the right planning and care, even a small garden in the UAE can become a fruitful source of fresh and healthy produce.**