



Garden Party

Benefits of Gardening

Gardening is a way of life for many people, whether it is flowers or fruits and vegetables, gardening can enhance you and your loved ones lives.

Benefits for you and your family of fruits and vegetable gardens:

- ◆ Fresh and nutritious fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables from your own garden are higher in nutrients than the ones you buy in the grocery store.
- ◆ Having your children assist you in the garden can increase the chance that they will eat more fruits and vegetables they have helped grow.
- ◆ Growing your own fruits and vegetables can offer you the opportunity to reduce the amount of pesticides that you use in your garden, making them healthier.
- ◆ Gardening increases physical activity. It is a great way to engage the whole family in physical activity and lets them help to take responsibility for the garden.
- ◆ The fruits and vegetables grown in your garden will promote health because they are rich in nutrients, especially in phytochemicals, anti-oxidants, vitamin C—which is especially important in fighting lead poisoning in your children, vitamin A and folate.
- ◆ Gardening gives you the opportunity to give back. If you have an abundant garden, you might give some of your produce to Helena Food Share.

Benefits for the Community:

- ◆ **School and community may decide to build a community or school garden. This is a tremendous learning tool for all involved as well as providing a source of nutritious fruits and vegetables.**
- ◆ **Gardens can foster a great sense of community through parent to parent connections, teacher to student or student to student.**

Benefits to the Environment:

- ◆ Tall fruit trees provide shade, which cools your home and yard down.
- ◆ Less pesticides means less contamination to the environment.
- ◆ Composting your produce peels and waste is much less expensive than buying fertilizer.

EPA will be holding a public meeting on August 17th from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.. The meeting will be held at the METG offices 325 Manlove St. This meeting is for the proposed designation of a Corrective Action Management Unit for final disposal of soil from the railroad right of way.

Lead Program
P.O. Box 1231
East Helena, MT

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Frequently Requested Phone #s

East Helena Lead Program:

406-457-8583

Lewis and Clark Public Health:

406-457-8900

<http://www.lccountymt.gov/health.html>

City of East Helena:

406-227-5321

www.easthelenamt.us

EPA:

406-457-5013

MTDEQ:

406-444-6433

SAFE GARDENING TIPS:

- If possible, construct a raised bed with safe materials (do not use treated lumber, treated railroad ties, or salvaged painted wood) with 24 inches of clean soil separated from native soil by a barrier such as landscape fabric.
- The two most common ways that humans are exposed to lead from gardening are:
 1. Ingestion of soil while gardening. This risk can be reduced by wearing gloves while gardening, washing hands thoroughly after gardening, and limiting children's exposure to the soil if they are helping with gardening tasks.
 2. Ingestion of soil tracked into a residence. This risk can be reduced by removing footwear used for gardening before entering the house.
- Studies have shown that lead does not readily accumulate in the fruiting parts of vegetable and fruit crops. Higher concentrations are more likely found on leafy vegetables and on the surface of root crops.

To minimize any potential absorption of lead by plants:

- Keep the pH levels above 6.5—lead is relatively unavailable to plants when the soil pH is above 6.5 and has high phosphorus levels. Use your composted garden wastes as your fertilizers.
- Add mulch to your garden to reduce dust and soil splash-back onto crops.
- Locate your garden away from streets and older painted buildings.

