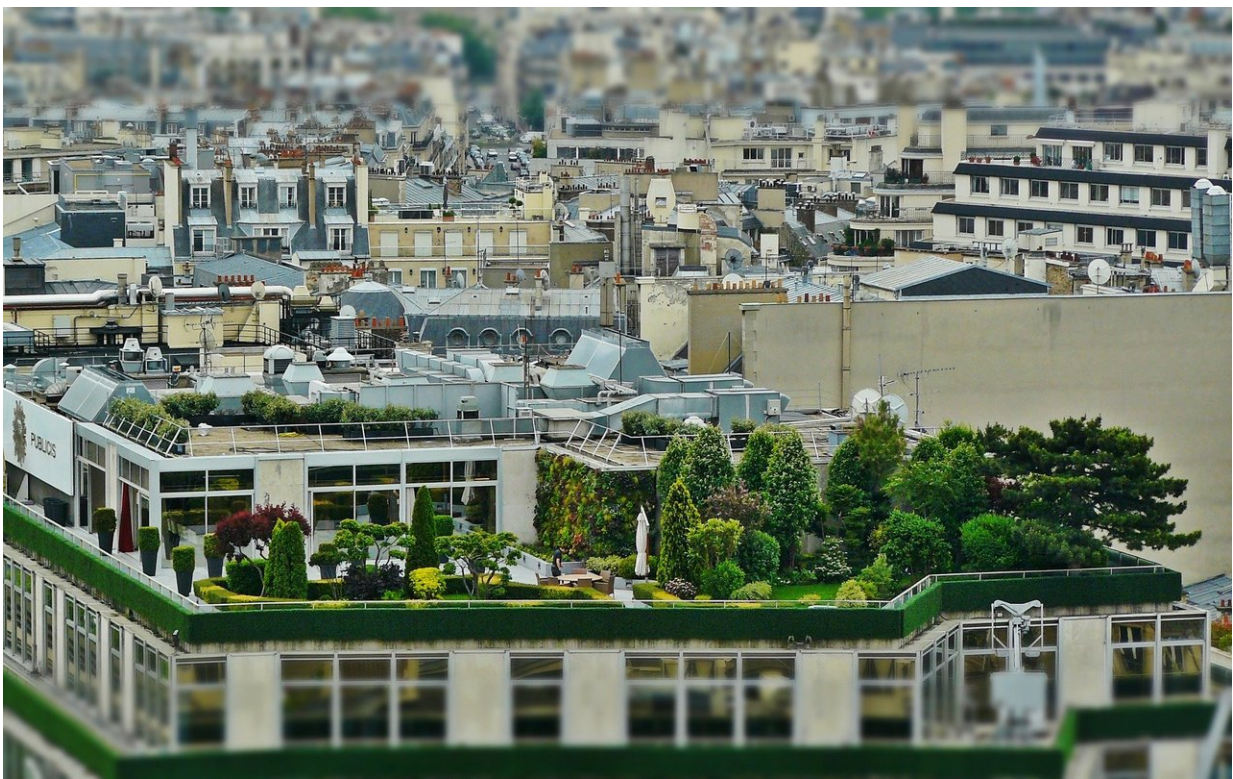


Mayo Clinic Minute: Health benefits of gardening

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Practicing social distancing means more time spent at home. And many people use this time to start a garden in their backyard. There's a saying that you reap what you sow. And in the case of a vegetable garden, a rich

harvest may bring more than dinner. Anya Guy, a Mayo Clinic dietitian, says gardening is good for your body and mind.

Go ahead, dig in. You may go from an empty plot to a bounty. Guy says tending a [garden](#) offers an abundance of health benefits.

"You will increase your intake of fruits and vegetables, ultimately because you have them right in your backyard," says Guy.

Gardening also can help reduce stress and anxiety levels, and offer light physical activity. Wondering what to grow? Guy says to consider a rainbow variety

"Different vegetables have a variety of different health benefits unique to each of them," says Guy.

Chili peppers and banana peppers, for example, contain capsaicin, which has been shown to have a number of health benefits. And then there's eggplant.

"Eggplant actually grows surprisingly well in a home garden. It's easy to grow and it can feed a lot of people in the family."

A homegrown tomato is often a gardener's pride. Rich in antioxidants, tomatoes contain potassium, vitamin C and are a source of fiber.

"If you don't have the option to garden at home, keep in mind that [community gardens](#) are another option," says Guy.

By embracing your green thumb, you may be able to unpack your vegetable basket instead of a grocery bag.

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