

# EATING FROM THE GARDEN

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UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI  
**Extension**  
 an equal opportunity/ADA institution

**Family Nutrition Education Programs**  
 Nutrition and life skills for Missouri families

## Program Description



The *Eating From the Garden* program provides evidence-based information to youth in schools and community programs. The program hopes to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables by youths through nutrition and gardening activities.

Childhood obesity has reached an epidemic level in this country. Approximately 15 percent of children in the U.S. are overweight and up to an additional 15 percent are obese. One of the main issues facing many children and families is access to safe, healthy, affordable food. This program helps kids improve their diet and food choices by providing them the skills to grow, harvest and prepare healthy food options. With help from area partners and volunteers, the program promotes healthier food choices, gardening skills and physical activity.

## Why Gardening?

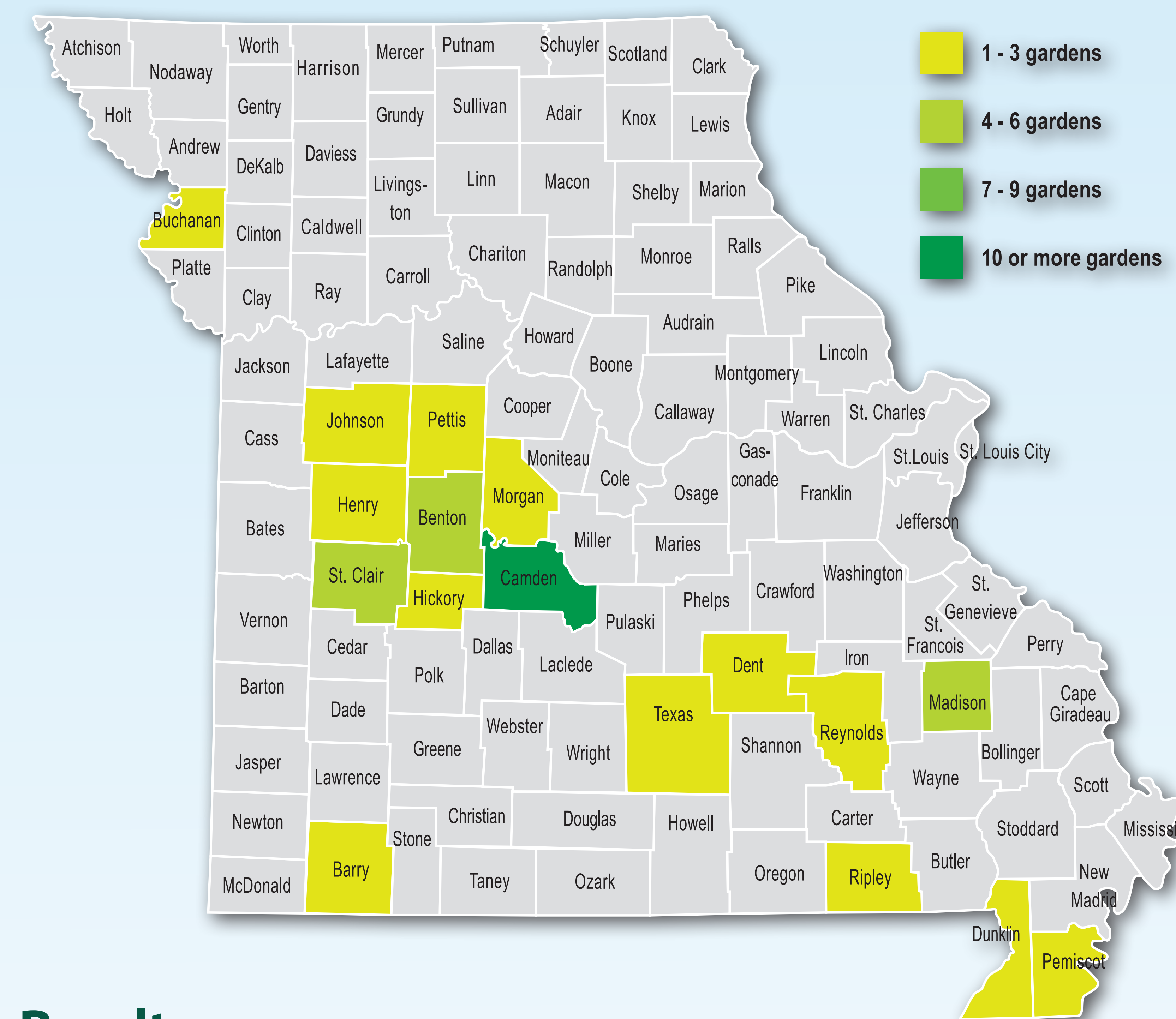
Gardening is a popular pastime for people of all ages. Children and their families can often enjoy this creative and fun activity in their own backyard. Growing fruits and vegetables in a home or a school garden provides an environment where nutrition and plant science skills can be taught. The *Eating From the Garden* curriculum provides hands-on activities to reinforce these lessons and skills.

School and community gardens have been expanding nationwide, which provides those who participate the opportunity to taste and prepare the foods that they have grown. When participants experience these foods, they are more likely to incorporate them into their daily food choices. This is important because most individuals do not consume the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables.

## Program Objectives

- Increase gardening skills
- Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Increase food preparation skills
- Increase participants financial understanding of gardening

## Garden Sites



## Results

Gardening allows both youth and adults to take great pride in their efforts and to give back to the community. Participants at each garden site determined how the excess produce would be distributed following the food tastings and demonstrations. Some sites chose to send the produce home with the children or families so that they could replicate the recipes tried during the program. Other sites donated the produce



to food pantries within the community. One school, in particular, incorporated the produce into their school lunch program. Each day the produce was served, *Eating From the Garden* signs were placed on the salad bars so children would know they had produced some of the foods being served.

The data below reflects the produce harvested from 20 sites from which we collected data. These data reflect only produce harvested from the spring plantings. Many of these gardens will be replanted for fall crops.

| Produce         | Input Cost | Yield (lbs.) | Retail value (organic produce) | Cost Savings |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| tomatoes        | \$39.54    | 348 lbs.     | \$947.76                       | \$908.22     |
| zucchini        | \$5.96     | 67 lbs.      | \$333.76                       | \$327.80     |
| peppers         | \$26.12    | 75 lbs.      | \$256.85                       | \$230.73     |
| okra            | \$0.01     | 40 lbs.      | \$203.66                       | \$203.65     |
| radishes        | \$4.01     | 32 lbs.      | \$155.00                       | \$150.99     |
| carrots         | \$5.19     | 33 lbs.      | \$131.34                       | \$126.15     |
| lettuce         | \$9.05     | 23 lbs.      | \$120.06                       | \$111.01     |
| squash          | \$0.00     | 53 lbs.      | \$105.47                       | \$105.47     |
| turnips         | \$6.63     | 26 lbs.      | \$64.48                        | \$57.85      |
| spinach         | \$6.30     | 12 lbs.      | \$64.27                        | \$57.97      |
| cantalope       | \$0.00     | 21 lbs.      | \$63.00                        | \$63.00      |
| cucumbers       | \$0.99     | 58 lbs.      | \$48.45                        | \$47.46      |
| turnip greens   | \$1.59     | 10 lbs.      | \$43.60                        | \$42.01      |
| mustard greens  | \$0.59     | 10 lbs.      | \$43.60                        | \$43.01      |
| cabbage         | \$0.00     | 32 lbs.      | \$40.00                        | \$40.00      |
| sugar snap peas | \$5.68     | 6 lbs.       | \$35.88                        | \$30.20      |
| onions          | \$5.32     | 16 lbs.      | \$34.88                        | \$29.56      |
| garbanzo beans  | \$0.00     | 5 lbs.       | \$27.50                        | \$27.50      |
| eggplant        | \$0.00     | 11 lbs.      | \$19.92                        | \$19.92      |
| watermelon      | \$0.00     | 10 lbs.      | \$15.00                        | \$15.00      |
| pumpkins        | \$0.00     | 10 lbs.      | \$15.00                        | \$15.00      |
| edamame         | \$0.00     | 8 lbs.       | \$16.72                        | \$16.72      |
| strawberries    | \$4.48     | 6 lbs.       | \$11.99                        | \$7.51       |
| broccoli        | \$0.00     | 2 lbs.       | \$9.84                         | \$5.36       |
| swiss chard     | \$0.00     | 1 lb.        | \$5.36                         | \$5.36       |
| basil           | \$0.00     | 1 lb.        | \$4.36                         | \$4.36       |
| green beans     | \$0.00     | 1 lb.        | \$4.00                         | \$4.00       |
| cilantro        | \$0.00     | 1 lb.        | \$2.26                         | \$2.26       |
| watermelon      | \$0.00     | 10 lbs.      | \$15.00                        | \$15.00      |
| pumpkin         | \$0.00     | 10 lbs.      | \$15.00                        | \$15.00      |



**Total yield:**  
**921 lbs.**

**Total input costs:**  
**\$121.46**

**Total retail value:**  
**\$3,248.87**

**Total cost savings:**  
**\$3,126.61**

For more information about *Eating From the Garden*, go online to [missourifamilies.org/eatfromthegarden](http://missourifamilies.org/eatfromthegarden).

**Funded in part by USDA SNAP.**  
 For more information, call MU Extension's Show Me Nutrition line at 1-888-515-0016. Running out of money for food? Contact your local food stamp office or go online to: [dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp](http://dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp).

