

GARDENING BASICS

First, create a sun map of your garden, yard, or the area you will be planting (if it's your patio, do a sun map of that). On one sunny day, just map your area every hour and draw where the sun is, where the shade is.

--this will help you know what types of plants to get: full sun, part sun, shade, etc.

Get a soil test kit or see if there is a local office that can perform them. You will want to get a sample for every general spot where you are going to be planting. You can skip this step if you are using containers and/or raised beds and packaged soil.

Know what growing zone you are located in. Grangeville is mostly zone 6b, but you can look up online, ask a local nursery, or the Uofl extension office.

Start with "easy" plants, ones that are pretty hardy and grow well in your zone. This is also where you will need to know what plants to get: full sun, part sun, mostly shade, all shade, etc. Good ones to start with, and they also grow well in containers, are: tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, radishes, lettuce, green beans, most herbs, and summer squash. This will give you a well-rounded variety of table vegetables.

If you don't buy your seeds or plants from a local nursery, make sure the online store is reputable. Only buy your seeds or plant starts from a good source.

You will also need to know if your plants need soil that is easily drainable, extra fertilizer, how deep to plant the seeds, when they are planted, and how much water to give them.

If you can, find a neighbor, friend, nursery, or an experienced gardener in your area from whom to get advice and guidance.

--the Uofl extension office at the Idaho County Courthouse is a great resource. They also have a list of master gardeners, and classes for gardeners.

--we have gotten a lot of great advice from LeAnne's Nursery in Grangeville.

--I also have a sister-in-law that's a master gardener, maybe you have one too :)

Be aware that some seeds will need to be started indoors weeks or months before they can be transplanted outdoors, so you will need to know what plants are like this, and plan accordingly. Investing in a good indoor grow light might be useful.

Finally, you need to pay attention to how much space your plants need as they grow. If the package or instructions say they need at least 18" between each plant, give it to them, they will fill that space in as they get bigger. Keep this in mind as you plan your garden space.

Most Importantly: HAVE FUN!