

Horticulture Program Fact Sheet # 04-18  
UF/IFAS Orange County Extension  
**Residential Market Gardens**

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Did you know that you can grow fruits, vegetables and herbs as a home occupation in unincorporated Orange County, Florida, provided you sell them off-site, away from your residence? Yes, your home garden can become your market garden, boosting family income while growing nutritious fresh local produce for your community. Follow the same growing procedures recommended for home gardeners, just add more space so you will have extra whole produce to sell. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/VH/VH02100.pdf>

The produce must be sold whole, not processed. The first cut to remove the fruit, vegetable or herb from the plant or ground is considered harvesting the crop. Be careful, any subsequent cutting of the produce is considered processing, which is not allowed except in a certified kitchen. This still leaves plenty of options for marketing your whole produce items at roadside stands, farmer's markets or other community venues.

It is recommended that you get a business license since many marketing outlets require it. Just ask for a farmer's market or peddlers license from your local government. Always make sure before starting any business venture that you know where you are going to sell your produce and what prices you can expect to receive. Do your homework, visit potential sites, asking questions and getting information before you start planting your market garden. Make sure you have done the math and it makes sense for your family!



Plan what you do and do what you plan. A well thought out business plan is always a good idea when starting any new venture. Put everything down on paper so you can visualize it. What crops are you going to put where in your market garden? Often the most popular produce items are leafy salad crops and fixings for salads such as tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, radishes, etc. Other crop selection factors include:

- The Florida season determines when warm or cool season vegetables are planted.
- The amount of time it takes to produce a crop variety and the average yield.
- Does the crop require bees for pollination? This can be a limiting factor in urban market gardens.

Equally important along with the successful production factors are the marketing and sales factors to ensure a viable sustainable market garden. These factors include:

- The post-harvest temperature necessary to maintain produce freshness and marketability for longer periods.
- The expected price you can receive for your produce item. Check grocery store prices for the items you plan to grow.
- The price per unit of produce versus the spacing of the plant and days from planting to harvest – example; lettuce plants versus watermelons.

As you can see there are a myriad of factors to consider in order to become a successful market gardener. If your residence is within a neighborhood association, you should check their rules before starting to make sure a market garden is allowed under their charter. Check for classes that can help you get started at your local Cooperative Extension Service. In Orange County call to receive more information at 407-254-9200 or go to their website, <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/orange/> for more information and a calendar of upcoming classes and events!

