

CL #8 GROW SOME EDIBLE PLANTS

Cara LaRose - Clearwater organic gardener – 10 October 2014.

PURPOSE: To plant edible plants that will provide highly nutritious elements to one's diet at any time. Moringa Oleifera, Pigeon Pea and Papaya are chosen for this checklist as they are easy to grow and are fast growing. There are many others that can be used instead for this checklist. Moringa and papaya are trees and pigeon pea is a tall shrub. They all can be harvested within a few months to 1 year - depending on the weather and other factors. See site Downloads section for

WHAT IS NEEDED:

- _____ Seeds ready for planting or for Moringa, obtain plants ready for transplanting now or seeds.
- _____ Potting soil for starting seeds.
- _____ Small pots or cups with holes in the bottom for drainage (for seed starting)
- _____ Large pots with holes or a sunny location to grow the plants in the ground
- _____ Aged manure from horses, rabbits, chickens, etc. and compost or bags of them from the store. Compost & manure can be gotten from Home Depot

Note: Most areas in Clearwater are very sandy and need to be amended with fertile soil or your plants will not survive or thrive.

- _____ A water source – the best is rain water but any can be used.

STEPS FOR PLANTING SEEDS:

- _____ Read on the internet about the type of plants you might like to grow.

For Moringa, check out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWfdbOGRKCo>

For Pigeon Pea check out: <http://www.tropicalpermaculture.com/pigeon-pea.html>

For Papaya check out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i77Dg7JoiOc>

There are many other sites you go to for these plants.

- _____ Decide what seeds you want to plant.

Planting first in small pots until seeds germinate, has the advantage of better control of them until they are ready for transplanting into the ground. However, papaya does not do well with transplanting and is best planted directly in the ground.

Papaya plants can be male, female, or bisexual, and you want to make sure that you have some females or bisexual plants among your seedlings. The male papayas don't bear fruit. **To grow good papayas you need a frost free climate, lots of sunlight, lots of water and very good soil.** If you can supply all of these, you can pretty much stick some papaya seeds in the ground at any time of the year, and six to ten months later they will start fruiting.

- _____ Obtain a locally grown papaya fruit.
- _____ Take a dozen or so seeds out of your fruit, wash and dry them.

PLANTING SEEDS IN THE GROUND:

- _____ Choose a safe, sunny location to grow your plants and remove weeds and stones.
- _____ Mix compost and manure into the soil down to about 1'.
- _____ Place your seeds 12" apart in the ground and cover them lightly.
- _____ Water them thoroughly and keep them moist until they germinate in about 2 weeks.

USING SMALL POTS FIRST (for moringa and pigeon pea):

- _____ Place potting soil in your pots almost up to the top, make a small hole and place your seeds in them. Cover the seeds with a thin layer of soil.
- _____ Water thoroughly and keep them moist until seeds germinate. You will first see a tiny shoot coming up, then some leaves at the top. This is when to make sure they get plenty of light.
- _____ Meanwhile, choose a sunny location where animals (or anything else) will not disturb your plants. Dig up all the weeds in the area and remove any rocks or other objects.
- _____ Keep seedlings well-watered until they are about 4-6 weeks old (depending on the type of plant) until they are strong enough to transplant into large pots or into the ground.

TRANSPLANTING SEEDLINGS into large pots or in the ground:

- _____ Dig holes large enough for your seedlings plus the soil around the roots and a little deeper.
- _____ Put a small amount of compost and manure in each hole and mix it with the soil at the bottom.
- _____ Carefully remove each seedling from its pot and place them in the holes and add soil around the plants.
- _____ Water thoroughly to allow roots to settle in. For pots, this mean to water until the water runs out the bottom.

Your plants will go into shock from transplanting but should recover in a day or 2.

FOR ALL PLANTS:

- _____ Water your plants when the surface gets dry (down to about the first 1"). This may be 2-3 times a week depending on the time of year.
- _____ Work in additional compost and manure to the first few inches around the plant (not too close to the stem!) every 2-4 weeks on a regular basis to keep them healthy. Their health will be transferred to you!

RESOURCES:

For moringa seeds – <http://www.echocommunity.org/?page=SeedOrder>, Cara LaRose cwlarose@gmail.com, ebay.com (Moringa Oleifera seeds)

For pigeon pea seeds – <http://www.echocommunity.org/?page=SeedOrder>

For papaya seeds - From any ripe papaya, preferably grown locally.