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## JBLM Community Gardens

# Growing gardens on JBLM

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There are ways for gardeners on Joint Base Lewis-McChord to keep their hands buried in the soil and their souls filled with the potential of tiny seeds.

For \$25 a year, you can have a 4-foot by 10-foot raised garden bed either at the McChord Field or Lewis North gardens. Community gardens are open to anyone with access to Joint Base Lewis-McChord. Both are located near the horse stables, and rakes, compost, water hoses are provided.

“Community gardens on JBLM are a great way to grow your own vegetables,” said Miriam Easley, with sustainability outreach for the Directorate of Public Works. “The community gardens have a lot of sun and experienced gardeners to assist you. Putting together a herb and salad garden can be a simple way to start.”

Easily grown herbs include basil, oregano, rosemary and sage. Common vegetables with strong nutritious content include arugula, beans, broccoli, carrots, chard, endive, kale, lettuce, spinach, squash, sweet potato, tomatoes and turnips.

Include edible flowers such as pansy or nasturtium for added color.

Have you ever seen broccoli growing? Growers may be interested in checking out Raindrops and Rainbows. This Child Development Center on Lewis North has a child friendly garden.

The junior participants and their parents help Lolita Estrada plant and harvest every year. It’s a chance to see how those tiny seeds transform into edible wonders.

Radishes make the first harvest, with a wide variety of edibles growing all summer and lots of pumpkins are available for fun and decorating in the fall.

The Warrior Transition Battalion’s Healing Garden, near Madigan Army Medical Center, is a place for wounded service members to garden in raised beds. They can grow vegetables, flowers, make a memorial and enjoy the community.

Novice gardeners have a chance to experiment with their gardens with support from Gary Ouellette, a retired sergeant major from I-Corps chaplains’ office and current Madigan employee.

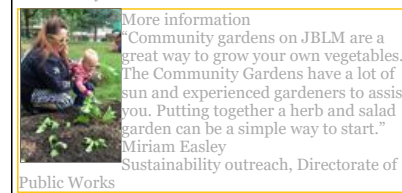
Container gardening can be a great way to decorate entryways and works well for living in an urban area. It can be as simple as planting a geranium in a pot or as complex as an overflowing whiskey barrel.

Start with a drought tolerant potting soil mix that can retain moisture and save watering time. Arrange your plants in the containers by planting taller plants in the back or center and shorter plants, that might spill over, closer to the front of the pot.

Consider planting a pollinator garden in a community garden plot or in a container to support local bees and butterflies. They love flowers such as alyssum, aster, bee balm, borage, fennel, goldenrod, hollyhock, lavender, marigold, oregano, coneflower, verbena, yarrow, zinnia and sunflowers.



Directorate of Public Works  
Volunteers from the Joint Base Lewis-McChord's Directorate of Public Works help with the Community Garden annual clean up at the Lewis North Community Garden March 20.



Public Works  
More information  
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Miriam Easley  
Sustainability outreach, Directorate of Public Works

Various flowering perennials also support neighborhood pollinators, and include native plants in your containers as they typically have nectar-and pollen-rich flowers that can be planted organically to provide a longer range food supply, from spring through fall.

Lifestyles have changed, and it has become a passion to eat healthier food, live a cleaner lifestyle and discover your connection to nature. Gardening guides are available everywhere, making it easier to beautify the world, change your environment and feel wonderful — it's a great family event as well.

For more information, call the Lewis North Community Garden at 253-967-7744 or the McChord Field Community Garden at 253-982-2206.

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