

How to plant a Super Food Garden – and enjoy a Grootie!

Try something fun this year, and plant your garden with Super Foods!

Why Super Foods? These are foods that are very rich with nutrients, while low in calories. Now is the time to plant Super Foods like:

- blueberries
- leafy greens like kale, spinach, collards and Swiss Chard
- Goji berries
- Raspberries
- Blackberries

Fresh produce, after all, offers more vitamins and trace minerals than store-bought food. Just-picked berries and greens are tastier, and if you opt to grow them organically, you will reap the benefits of eating foods free of chemicals. Plus, it's enjoyable and fun to be outdoors and in your own garden. You can also earn bragging rights when you showcase the biggest tomato on the block, coming from your very own garden.

Did you know that blueberries are cited by nutritionists as a Super Food because these little yummy berry bites are chock full of Vitamin C, Vitamin K and manganese?

You can combine a couple of these garden grown Super Foods to make one of my favorite 'drink your yard' drinks a GROOTHIE, otherwise known as a green smoothie. It's a way of making vegetable smoothies a little more tasty by adding a cup of blueberries into your blender with your veggies. The blueberries add a distinctive purple color to smoothies – so the kiddos don't turn away from this goodness just because of the green color.

Here's a great 'Drink Your Yard' Grootie recipe to try:

Combine in a blender:

- 1 cup of kale
- 1/2 cup of blueberries
- ¾ cup of Soy milk or almond milk
- 1 TB of almond butter or peanut butter
- ½ cup of ice chips



Leafy greens like Kale and Chard are essential to a healthy diet – and offer a lot of variety of options in your diet. When they are harvested at very early stages, Kale and Chard make yummy salads. Later on in the summer, the greens are better off eaten after a little bit of cooking. You can sauté the greens and add them to your dinner – or serve them cold in a salad after a quick steaming. As fall approaches, Kale and Chard are great additions to warm bean soups.

Now is the time to start planting these leafy veggies in your garden so you can maximize time and taste! Our gardening experts at Warner's Nursery specialize in the selection, care, and growth of veggies and berries suited for northern Arizona – so talk to us about your ideas!

In general, blueberries that thrive in northern Arizona come in a few varieties: North Country, Northblue, Northland, Sunshine Blue, and brand new this year, Top Hat that grows in a pot! We can recommend which variety will work with your garden's soil, sunlight and drainage conditions. Blueberries thrive in cool, moist, well-drained soil that is slightly acidic. So talk to our gardening specialists about amending your soil when planting your blueberries to raise the acid levels.

Leafy green veggies do very well in cold temperatures – so you can buy starter plants now from Warner's Nursery and start harvesting quickly. Another benefit of growing veggies like spinach – they are very sustainable! You can harvest cuttings from leafy greens – and then in a few weeks, harvest again from the same plant when it grows back more leaves. Chard and Kale can thrive in higher temperatures too, so you can continue to harvest them through the summer and into the fall, as long as they are protected from mid-afternoon sun.

An extra bonus – Chard and Kale are quite attractive additions to your garden (or your flower garden) because of their gorgeous leaves. Swiss chard turns scarlet as it grows older – and then produces flowers.

The small investment you make in purchasing starter plants now will be well-spent including saving on food bills AND providing nutritious meals for your family. For three generations, we have been helping families enjoy gardening at Warner's Nursery – it's what we love to do. So come visit us and talk to us about starting a garden for your family!

Happy Gardening,

Misti Warner- Andersen
Warner's Store Manager