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## **A Blog on Building a Backyard Garden**

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## Abstract

My capstone project involved building a backyard garden and writing a blog to include my innovative approach to gardening. In the past few years, there have been disruptions in the food supply chain and the price of food has skyrocketed due to inflation. I can teach people how to grow food their family will enjoy in their own backyard. Fewer people will have to depend on the food provided in the grocery store. People will have a greater knowledge of what they are eating and how it was made. Those people who live in more rural areas will not have to worry about transportation to get fresh produce when it is available in their backyard. My blog teaches individuals how to plan, build garden boxes, plant seeds indoors, and explore the different options for materials to use within the garden.

*Keywords:* backyard, garden, step-by-step, Service Learning

## **Section 1: Introduction to your Capstone Project**

I am working on how I can influence my community to become more self-reliant and build their own backyard garden. It is hard to find information for a small backyard garden in my area of Twin Falls, ID. I wanted to create a blog for people looking for information on gardens for small backyards rather than large pieces of land. If people can have a garden in their backyard full of fresh produce, they don't have to rely on transportation to the grocery store, the food supply chain, and the price of food due to inflation. I documented my whole process of creating a garden and planting seeds and shared it on my blog for my stakeholders.

The blog started with planning out space to put a backyard garden. From the planning process, I taught readers how to plant seeds indoors to prolong the growing season in Idaho. I bought all the supplies to build garden boxes and provided step-by-step instructions on how I build my garden boxes. Finally, I taught my readers about the different materials that can be used in the garden from dirt to rock to mulch. I also wrote step-by-step instructions on how to install a drip line directly into an irrigation sprinkler system.

## **Section 2: Elements coming together**

### **Innovative Approach**

I have talked to many neighbors in my area about their garden setup and which side of the yard gets the best sunlight. I have also done a lot of research on social media platforms of people sharing about their gardens. I am taking all of these opinions of others along with some research about my specific environment to find the best gardening method for me. I went to social media for a lot of my research because that is where everyday people are influencing a community with their gardens and tips. I also have turned to my community library and community college for courses or information

on gardening. These sources are experts in their fields, or they at least know what has worked for their own gardening experiences. There is not one right way to build a backyard garden which is why I have found so much information. I did some research through the Journal of Nutrition and Public Health Nutrition because these journals deal with a lot of research on the food supply and access to healthy food in communities.

It is hard to find information about my specific area for backyard gardening. My approach is innovative because I am not only teaching people how to build their own backyard garden, but I am giving them the freedom to be self-reliant. People who have a backyard garden will rely less on the food supply at the grocery store and know exactly how their food is grown.

### **Emotional Intelligence**

Building a backyard garden started out as a project for personal reasons. I watched my father plant and farm for most of my adolescent years, so I picked up that love of watching things grow from just a tiny seed into something to eat. I love the feeling that I have while working in a garden and getting my hands dirty. I love nurturing small plants and following through with the product. I had a small garden last year, but some plants didn't do very well and ended up dying, so I decided I wanted to design a bigger area for a garden. Gardening can provide many more benefits than just the food that is grown. A garden provides a natural habitat for native animals, provide social interaction within their community, mental clarity, and of course production of healthy produce (Glover et al., 2005). As I was thinking of ideas for my capstone project, I started thinking of projects I needed around the house but then I realized that some people don't have the skills to build a garden. I want to share my knowledge with them so they can have the confidence to build their own gardens and reap the benefits of hard work and

dedication. Not only do people gain mental clarity from working in their gardens but in the end, they have fresh produce they didn't have to buy from the store.

My blog is like a personal journal of my gardening experiences. I will show people how to build a backyard garden and show the challenges and triumphs that I endure. I will document how I was able to adapt to roadblocks and issues, like weather, that I will have to encounter when starting a backyard garden. People will read my blog and know that an initial plan does not always work out the way it was intended, but the end goal was accomplished, and a garden was built. Those starting their own backyard gardens will be able to relate to the challenges I encounter because they have experienced them too.

Teaching people how to build a backyard garden through my blog will be valuable to the community members who read my blog. People will have a garden resource available to them for the specific area of Twin Falls, ID. I know that having a backyard garden will reduce our reliance on the food supply at the grocery store. People will not have to travel so far to a grocery store for fresh produce because it is grown in their backyard.

### **Creative Thinking**

I drew from my own personal experiences of gardening to inspire a blog to help others get started with their own gardens. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions in the food supply chain, fresh produce has been expensive and hard to find in grocery stores (Sathe et al., 2022). I don't want to rely on the food supply chain in the grocery stores for fresh produce to sustain a healthy diet for my family. I know so many community members rely on the availability of fresh produce at the grocery store and a blog provides a platform for engaging with a specific audience. I can teach my community members how to grow a garden in their backyard and interact with my readers through comments, social media, and email. I can also

incorporate their feedback and suggestions into my blog, which can help my blog improve and evolve.

I know that there are many blogs out on the internet that provide content on backyard gardens and growing seeds, but most have a large property to work with. I have yet to come across information on growing backyard gardens in my area of Twin Falls, ID. I know that many people in my area could benefit from growing gardens in their own backyards and reap the mental benefits and fresh produce, but they think that their space is not big enough. Just like low-income families who participated in the program called Farm Fresh Food for Healthy Kids (F3HK), they were more satisfied with their fresh produce because they could pick it out of the garden themselves (White et al., 2018). I can see the unique aspect of my approach as I try to show people that a successful garden can be done in a small backyard through my own experience and process. I am also able to use my blog as a creative outlet as I share challenges and experiences with my audience that add a more personal connection.

### **Your Innovative Solution**

There are many blogs on gardening, on the internet but they require a lot of money and resources to transform a large piece of land. Raised garden beds are a great option to garden in smaller spaces because the plants are elevated which makes it easier to tend to the plants, and the soil is warmer allowing the growing season to be longer. The soil found on your property is not the best but since you have brought in quality soil from the garden center it provides better nutrients and allows for better drainage (Better Homes & Garden, n.d.). In fact, I have created a garden space in other houses that I have lived in. I have never created a garden space for this particular space at this house. I don't have a large backyard, but I know I have enough space to grow some fresh produce for my family that could give me enough, so I don't have to solely rely

on the supply at the grocery store. I decided to build a raised garden, from scratch, in my own backyard and show people several stages of my own process. In my blog, I included how I designed my garden space, the cost of buying all my supplies, how to build the boxes, how to get soil in bulk, and the process of starting seeds indoors. One potential outcome that demonstrates innovation could be the process of starting a garden indoors when the weather is not ideal for starting a garden outside. We cannot always rely on good weather to start a garden. I have also created a drip line system that will tap into my current irrigation sprinkler system and automatically water my garden on a set schedule every day.

My blog is more innovative than other gardening blogs because my blog offers unique and original content that includes personal experiences, research, and my own insights that cannot be included or covered elsewhere. My own gardening experience provides a new perspective that challenges conventional information. For example, I had to start most of my plants indoors due to the abnormal, extreme winter weather in March 2023. I have created my own drip line system to connect to my current irrigation sprinkler system. As I share my blog with people in my community, I hope it will foster a strong sense of community and encourage reader engagement through comments, social media, and other means.

### **Section 3: Results**

I measured the success of my blog by the number of viewers looking for garden inspiration that clicked on my blog provided by the website, blogger.com. I chose to promote my blog through my personal social media page and the Magic Valley Gardening & Houseplants Facebook group. Overall, my blog has 179 views and one comment. I have interviewed two individuals, about the effectiveness of my blog. I asked them several questions about the flow of the blog, the use of language, the number of resources, and the ability of a beginner to build a



backyard garden based on the information given in my blog. Overall, the blog has had a positive impact on readers interested in starting a backyard garden and experts looking for new information.

The benefit of my blog, to my stakeholders, is an innovative approach to starting a backyard garden. It is a guide that effectively provides valuable information and resources to beginning gardeners on how to plan out their garden space, build garden beds, plant seeds indoors, choosing and buy necessary supplies. Starting a backyard garden and growing fresh produce will highlight the importance of eating locally grown produce and encourage my local community to eat a more balanced and healthy diet that will have long-term health benefits.

Overall, my blog on backyard gardening had a positive impact on my family, neighbors, community members, and blog readers. My blog has increased their interest in gardening while reading it. The blog provides inspiration and motivation for readers to start a similar backyard project and grow their own produce. Growing produce in the backyard will give my followers peace of mind knowing what is in their food and not having to rely on the grocery store to provide it. I hope my blog will provide opportunities to connect with other community members who have experience or expertise in backyard projects, which could lead to new collaborations and partnerships.

#### **Section 4: Conclusion**

I created a blog to show my innovative approach to building my own backyard garden. In the blog, I included how I designed my garden space, the cost of buying all my supplies, how to build the boxes, how to get soil in bulk, install drip lines, and the process of starting seeds indoors. I anticipated that my blog would reach at least 20 people on the internet that are looking for guidance on starting a backyard garden. I hope the readers of my blog were inspired and

motivated to add some garden beds in their own backyards and start plants indoors from seeds. I hope that the idea of growing fresh produce in their own backyard will spark their interest in eating a healthier diet. I was overwhelmed by the 179 readers who visited my blog. I confirmed my initial thought that there are people in my community who would like more information on starting a garden in their own backyard. I knew a little bit about gardening before, but through my research, I learned more about gardening including how I can incorporate new things to help my own garden thrive. I learned about starting seeds indoors and prolonging the growing season in Idaho. Mother nature is definitely in charge of the gardening season, so I learned a lot of patience and adaptability as I worked around the winter weather. Working with the website, Blogger.com, was a positive but eye-opening experience. I gained technical skills as I learned how to create and format a blog from scratch, and then track viewers with the analytics of the website. I could have used different materials for my boxes. I could have used cardboard to line my raised beds instead of a weed barrier to kill the grass underneath. I could have used a mix of containers and vertical gardening techniques to save space. I have chosen to water my garden with my current irrigation sprinkler system. However, to enhance innovation, I would investigate experimenting with collected rainwater to water my plants in the garden. I would also investigate adding a compost bin, in my garden, to conserve resources and promote a healthier ecosystem by reducing waste. The great thing about gardening is that there is not one way of doing it. There are a lot of methods in gardening that will yield the same result, fresh produce.

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## Section 6: Appendix

[www.twingardenbox.blogspot.com](http://www.twingardenbox.blogspot.com)

