Science Societies

# The Energizing Potential of Online Gardening Workshops

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*A windowsill garden after one week of growth during an “Energize Your Life” virtual gardening class. Photo by Kim Spaccarotella.*

Recent interest in container gardening and virtual gardening classes suggest these activities help families grow produce and overcome barriers to traditional gardening, including lack of space and knowledge. However, nutrition education materials for online gardening classes are limited.

Researchers sought to identify the factors that make virtual container gardening classes effective and enable participants to continue gardening after the program is done. They adapted curricula developed by Washington State University for five virtual classes for adults that emphasized container vegetable gardening and nutrition. At the end of the program, the researchers collected participants' feedback through a survey.

Participants requested recipes that were quick, easy, inexpensive, adaptable, and family-friendly. They appreciated being able to join the workshops via Zoom and rewatch the recordings. Challenges for participants included follow-up, over-watering, and germination of some seeds. For the future, possible strategies to overcome these issues include identifying participants' preferred methods of follow-up, keeping a watering log, using a spray bottle to water, and providing multiple varieties of seeds for replanting.

Though gardening workshops often provide standardized content, tailoring the delivery method, content, tips, recipes, and seeds to the target audience may help educators better support participants' ability to maintain a container garden during a virtual program.

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