

## **Electra's gardening story**

My Mom started us gardening when we were kids, so this has always been a hobby for me. All my life I've loved plants, and tend our green and blooming friends here. Besides the vegetables, I take care of the fruit trees and perennials, flowers, and boysenberries.

I have a couple of raised beds for crops. This year I planted a winter garden with cool weather vegetables: kale, peas, chard, broccoli, broccoli rabe, and lettuce.

For an experiment I tried herbs in the smaller bed, which produced a good crop of basil. Made lots of pesto! Nothing else took very well, but I'll try again with other herbs in the fall.

Tomatoes and cukes, some squash and peppers, are in the front garden. An area opened up where a large shrub died last year, so I've taken advantage of that space. Unfortunately, the squash was a disappointing bust, as we only harvested three. The little green arms on the carrot man are immature squash (you can eat the tiny ones that aren't fertilized if you pick them right away).

We don't garden on a large scale, but I'm coming to realize that you have to plant more if you are going to get enough to eat! I have a lot to learn about the science of gardening.

Lots of tomatoes this year – more than anything else! And not just the ones I planted, but also volunteers that came up in the yard from compost. Those make for fun surprises.

Some years we have seen a variety of volunteer vegetables throughout our yard, and in the raised bed too, when I let them grow. I've had pumpkin, butternut squash, acorn squash, melons, baby and bell peppers, gourds, and always tomato volunteers. The opportunists tend to flourish in places where they do best, just as wild plants do, and come up at the right time. I like that aspect of Mother Nature.