

Anderson Parks program focuses on winter gardening

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(Photo: Thanks to Krystal Gallagher)

Just because the garden is tucked away for a winter's slumber doesn't mean the growing season has to end.

The secrets of enjoying homegrown herbs and greens during the dead of winter will be spelled out in a special program being offered by the Anderson Park District.

Registration is underway for Winter Windowsill Gardening. The program will be presented by Krystal Gallagher, gardener with Gorman Heritage Farm in Evendale.

It's surprising what you can grow, Gallagher said. It's true, the light level is much lower in the winter. With the right plants and a great spot indoors, winter gardening is possible.

Gallagher said fruit and vegetables, like tomatoes and peppers, that require a lot of energy to grow are not good choices. Green leafy plants like herbs, lettuce and Swiss chard are all possible.

The secret is selecting a great spot in the house, preferably a south facing window. If your home lacks a window with good sun exposure, don't fret. Gallagher said if you're willing to invest a little money grow lights can help make winter gardening dreams a reality.

While preparing for the upcoming program, she said she added to her own knowledge. Strawberries can be grown indoors. If you select the right variety and give them the right light, soil and nutrients a fresh, homegrown strawberry in the dead of winter is possible, Gallagher said.

This is not the park district's first gardening related program, recreation supervisor Monica Friedl said. In 2011 the park district offered a composting class, she said. The current gardening series started in 2013 and has included a variety of topics.

"We have had experts in the various fields present the programs and have worked with Ron Wilson the radio personality/"yardening" expert, local herbalist Rita Heikenfeld, various experts from the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden and the Civic Garden Center among others," Friedl said.

Ideas for topics are shared by program participants, she said.

“We try to stay on top of the topics that involve gardening, nature, and/or being outdoors,” Friedl said. “Maintaining fresh food during the winter months seems to be an important topic in our community. So far, we have had several registrations since our winter registration period began.”

The Winter Windowsill Gardening program is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 26. Space is limited. Visit www.andersonparks.com (<http://www.andersonparks.com>) to register online in advance or for information call, 513-388-4513.

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