



Gardening takes time and planning. Sometimes it takes creativity. Edgar County Master Gardeners Steven and Kim Trine have the gift of all three. Their recently purchased home in Paris, Illinois has been receiving updates to nearly every room since they moved in. Now that the weather is warming up, so has their outdoor space.

Using mostly found items, including a water tank from a family member, some mineral bucket containers from a livestock farmer friend, and five gallon buckets wrapped in discarded burlap sacks from a local store, the Trine's are transforming their back patio into a raised garden. Kim says, "We even have an old grocery cart from the former Woolco store in

Terre Haute." It won't be long before the potatoes planted in that grocery cart will create a potato tower. Because potatoes typically take a lot of space to grow, Kim says they opted for a potato tower so they could use vertical space rather than the hard-to-come-by horizontal space.

Another vertical aspect of the garden is the "salad bar". Steven attached long horizontal planters to the wooden fence at varying heights, then planted lettuce, arugula, spinach, kale, onions, radishes and carrots. They look forward to the time when they can take their colander and garden shears right outside their back door and collect fresh salad ingredients for their meals.

When space is limited, gardeners have to be creative. Knowing and understanding the growing seasons of different vegetables is a clever way to reuse containers. "We currently have peas planted in the large water tank. When the peas are done we will plant green beans in there," says Kim. They also have multiple containers arranged around the water tank where they will plant tomatoes, peppers, zucchini and flowers.

Steven and Kim know that gardening takes planning. Inside their home they have an area set aside for a nursery of seedlings which are beginning to sprout. These young plants will be transferred to their new outdoor containers when the weather is right. The Trine's also know gardening is not an exact science. Varying conditions of soil, weather and pests can alter the best of plans. Steven admits, "We are trying some new and different techniques to see how they might work for us. You might even call them experiments."

Illinois Extension plans to follow the progress of the Trine's raised garden and post photos on their website. If you want to see updates, visit go.illinois.edu/localgardens. Steven Trine became a Master Gardener in 2015 after completing the 14-week online training. Kim, an employee of Illinois Extension as the Program Coordinator of Ag and Natural Resources, became a Master Gardener in 2018.

Master Gardeners hold day-time meetings in Edgar County once a month. There is also an evening Tri-County (Clark, Crawford, Edgar) Master Gardener meeting each month in Clark County, plus a monthly Master Naturalist meeting that alternates between Clark and Edgar counties. Registration is going on now through May 18 for you to become a Master Gardener. Online training starts June 15. Please email Kim at ktrine@illinois.edu to begin the application process.



Water tank for peas, then green beans



Salad Bar on Fence



Close-up of Salad Bar



Potato Tower in shopping cart



Seedlings started indoors

