

[Kosher Cooking and Gardening](#)

This has been a killer winter for Toronto. Here at Mitzuyan Kosher Catering, it was a real *fershtinkiner*. Honestly, it was our customers and supporters who kept us going with a joke, a sympathetic shoulder, and encouragement.

I think everyone in Ontario has earned this long Victoria Day weekend we get this year. A couple of weeks ago, I suggested [a picnic would be a good idea](#). If you want it kosher and catered, well, we'd be happy to help a little or a lot. I think it's safe to say our chefs and servers are looking forward to catering warm-weather events, perhaps an [outdoor wedding](#), from our exciting kosher menu.

Growing Food is Central to Kosher Thinking

I've stressed that the central thing about keeping kosher is thinking about what food you eat and how it's prepared. Growing your own food and/or spices is kind of an exciting and energizing way to uphold an overall healthier, "whole" diet that I think contributes to kosher cooking. You can buy fresh produce but with practice and patience, you can grow it, too.



Seedlings getting ready to join the kosher cooking experience.

I daydreamed about gardening this winter as I watched the ice get thicker. As caterers who are dedicated to creating modern, exciting kosher menus, we get excited about things like fresh produce. It got us thinking that planning even a small garden could be a great way to spend Victoria Day and reignite enthusiasm for preparing your own healthy kosher food. You already know you can't beat fresh vegetables.

Start a Garden This Victoria Day Weekend

Queen Vic must have loved gardens. Goodness knows there are plenty named for her.

I found a website that talks about [sustainable food in Ontario](#) that includes information about what to plant in Ontario, and when. It turns out that Victoria Day is around the time that the frost ends, so if you want to start growing outside, this is as good a time as any. The soil outside is warm enough to

handle seedlings or even support seeds. Here are a few examples of what to plant as it gets warmer out:

- 5° C (41°F) is good for lettuce, spinach, peas, and parsnips.
- 10 C (50F) is good for leeks, onions, and potatoes
- 15 C (59F) is good for beans and beets
- 20 C (68F) is the time to plant the fun stuff: tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, and corn

Temperatures fluctuate, of course, but this is a general guide. Plus, you can still start seedlings indoors and transfer outside later in the season.

If you live in the central city, obviously there's little space for dirt. But indoor herb gardens are popular. Fresh herbs are as important for flavorful kosher cooking as fresh vegetables. And frankly, the packaged spices in the grocery store aren't exactly inexpensive because a lot of them have to be imported. Check out this article from Eat Right Ontario about [growing an indoor herb garden](#).

The best thing about growing herbs is that once they start to sprout, you *have* to use them for the plants to continue to grow. This practically guarantees interesting flavors in your kosher cooking!