



## GUAM ENABLED GARDENING: ADAPTIVE GARDENING SERIES

### Site Selection

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**I**n the U.S. today, gardening is considered a favorite outdoor activity, right alongside golfing and jogging. Approximately 75% of U.S. households, whether novice or experienced, participate in some type of gardening activity.

However, gardening is not only a recreational hobby. It can also help one's physical and mental well-being, regardless of age. For instance, people affected by health conditions that limit mobility can benefit from increased physical activity. Furthermore, through the activity of nurturing plants to bear vegetables, fruits or flowers, one can experience the product of the effort. Also, decreased stress and an increased sense of well-being are reported as other benefits of gardening activities.

Nevertheless, there are barriers for those who experience physical and mental limitations. For example, people who experience arthritis may be challenged due to joint pain from bending or stooping to tend to the garden. An enabled garden allows an individual with specific challenges to participate. This series of fact sheets explain gardening methods, technique adaptations, and how to create enabled gardens specific to Guam.\*

**S**ite selection is one of the most important steps when starting a garden. Some of the things to be considered include sun, water, soil, slope, wind, and existing vegetation, such as certain trees and weeds.

- Select a site with plenty of light.
  - Most vegetables require at least 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight per day. Some root crops, leafy vegetables, and herbs can tolerate some shade.
  - Avoid a site that has obstructions, such as buildings and trees, that can shade the garden.
  - Limited sunlight can increase disease problems.
- The garden area should be near a water source.
- Determine the size of the garden.
- Create an inventory of environmental conditions that can affect plant growth.
  - Ideally, the site should be level so the soil

drains properly.

- Soil should not be compacted.
- Guam generally has shallow soils. A depth of 6 to 8 inches is considered adequate.
- Try to avoid rocky areas. If unavoidable, remove large rocks and incorporate soil amendments into the hole. If the soil is too rocky or unsuitable for gardening, consider growing plants in raised beds or containers (see Fact Sheet #3).
- If possible, select a site that is not windy in order to protect crops from wind damage. Doing this will also conserve soil moisture, which can reduce the amount of water needed to grow productive plants.



#### Glossary:

**Organic matter** - any material that was once a living organism, such as peat moss, compost, ground bark, manure, etc. that is partly decomposing. It provides many functions, including improving soil quality, drainage, and reducing erosion.

\* The references used for the Introduction of each fact sheet in the Guam Enabled Gardening: Adaptive Gardening Series is listed in the Bibliography of *Site Selection*.

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