There are many ways families can increase household food security during this time of crisis. Growing even a few plants at home, conserving resources, and sharing with neighbors can go a long way to reducing a family food budget.

**Grow your own garden**
There is a resurgence of interest in home gardening happening right now around the country. This is a great way to provide fresh, nutritious food for your family without making extra trips to the grocery store, and it is economical in the long run.

- Grow the things you like to eat
- Start small and build on success
- Container gardening and micro-hydroponics are options even with very limited space
- Aquaponic systems can provide vegetables as well as fish for protein without taking up much additional space
- Try locally adapted seeds when possible, and consider saving your own seed to replant
- Involve the whole family: There are lots of great resources to involve keiki of all ages in the garden. CTAHR’s Nutrition Education for Wellness program has family-friendly lessons that will walk through step-by-step from planning your garden to harvest. Farm to Keiki is another program for families and teachers including Hawaii-specific gardening, cooking, and nutrition information.

There are many other resources available to learn more. Here is a great guide to get started.

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**Ways to conserve food resources**

**Reduce waste**
Much of the food we buy at the store goes to waste for one reason or another. Utilizing leftovers, meal planning, and taking inventory of food on-hand before shopping can all help to reduce waste and conserve resources. There are many resources online to help with meal planning and shopping, even if shopping for a two-week supply.

**Share with neighbors**
Sharing food is common practice already in Hawaii, as in many rural areas. Sharing produce from a home garden or surplus from hunting and fishing are examples that support food security for the whole community.

**Food preservation**
Pickling, fermenting, smoking, drying, freezing, and canning are great ways to preserve excess during seasons of abundance.

**Looking for eggs?**
Consider starting your own backyard flock of laying hens! While managing chickens is an added responsibility, a small coop or chicken tractor can be built with relatively low inputs, and commercial feed is readily available. If purchased as chicks, remember they will not start laying until they are about 6 months old.

**Food safety questions?**
- There is no evidence of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 being spread by food or fresh produce (FDA)
- More detailed information can be found in CTAHR Farm Food Safety Reminders

**Resources**
- Getting Started: Creating a Garden in Hawaii
- Hawaii Seed Growers Network
- CTAHR Seed Program
- CTAHR Guide to Saving Seed
- National Center for Home Food Preservation

Photo: Rebekah Magers

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