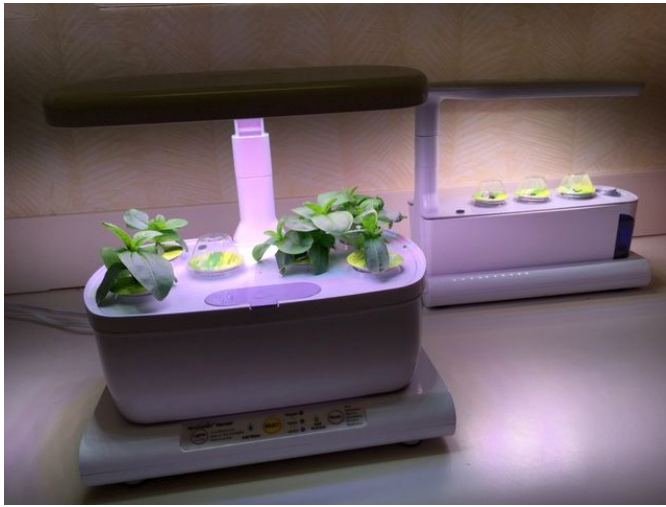


Inside Gardens



I've always enjoyed gardening. Nothing too fancy, a few flowers, herbs, and the occasional tomato or pepper plant. This is a tradition that was passed down to me by my mother. I remember her planting a classic Italian garden of plum tomatoes, basil, and green peppers in

the postage stamp strip of grass in back of her home in Flushing, New York.

She would dutifully tend to it every morning during the spring and summer months and the produce she'd somehow manage to coax from it was nothing short of astonishing! There was always fresh Italian tomatoes for salads or to put on sandwiches and just enough to make a small batch of fresh sauce which was seasoned by an abundance of fresh basil.

These days, I don't have much of a yard for planting or the desire to spend much time out in the intense South Florida heat. That's why I was so excited to discover the Aerogarden! I purchased mine [online](#), but you can also find them in the big box retail stores like Costco and Walmart. They're manufactured by Mircale-Gro, the company that makes plant fertilizer.



I started out planting herbs: basil, oregano, and Italian parsley. All ready for pizza! They were really easy to set up and the only tricky thing is figuring out the timers. I think the main problem will always be in the timer that controls when the grow light turns on and off. They should

be on 14 or 18 hours and off 8 or 6 hours.

Since I go to bed early, I have to rely on my husband, George, to tell me what time the lights went off. That's fun because he'll say, "I think they went off at 11 or maybe it was 10 or 10:30." One of the Aerogardens has a timer that is going off and on at crazy times. I wrote to the company about it and they replaced free of charge with no additional shipping charge.

When there is an inch growth under the domes, you remove the domes and adjust the height of the lights as the plants grow. It's so much fun to watch the growth and of course, harvesting the fruits of your labor. In fact, everything is growing so rapidly that I can't keep up with it. Since the growth is so full, the garden needs water every day, even sometimes twice a day. At this point, I could probably use an [interior plant maintenance company](#) to come in on a regular basis and take care of my gardens for me!

I even planted some tomatoes which you can see in the photo below. They were delicious, but very small and I wound up removing them.



I had some extra herb pods leftover so I planted those in its place (dill, savory, and Genovese basil). That was in the three pod planter. As for the six pod garden, it has gotten so overgrown that I can't keep up with it. I have so much basil frozen and now I'm even trying to freeze the coriander. I think I might remove all six and just plant flowers and then I would have some pretty flowers on my utility room counter.

I never thought I would have such prolific growth! Coriander is so hard to keep when you buy it in the grocery store and I didn't expect that it would grow as fully as basil. It's so fresh tasting and goes great in eggs and salsa or any Mexican dish.

I planted flowers (zinnias) in my larger aerogarden as I couldn't keep up with the herbs. I could open a herb shop! In my smaller garden I started a new herb growth, basil, oregano, and parsley. I'm sure I'll end up putting flowers in that one also. Whenever we have company they go right to my Aerogarden. It's such a big attraction!