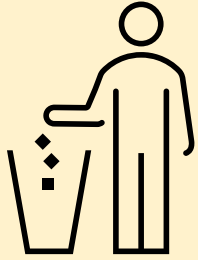


Gardening After a Flood: Soil and Garden Safety in Industrial Areas

Flood water can have **germs and chemicals** that make people and pets sick.
Food from gardens affected by flood water may be **unsafe to eat**.

Throw away fruit and vegetable plants affected by flood water

Discard plants that had contact with flood water, even if they were not completely under water.
Do not compost plants and vegetables contaminated by flood water. Put them in the garbage.

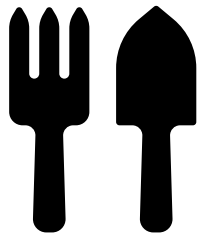


Plants can be unsafe to eat because of:

- Bacteria, viruses, parasites, and industrial chemicals in the water.
- Plants may absorb these contaminants into the parts that people eat.
- Cooking does not remove the risk of industrial contamination.

Rebuild your fruit and vegetable garden

Replace and replant soil after flooding if you live in an industrial area, or in an area with a higher risk of environmental pollution.



- Test your soil. King County and Seattle residents may be eligible for free soil tests. Visit the King Conservation District website to learn more.
<https://kingcd.org/programs/better-soils/healthy-soil/>
- Replace your garden soil or add at least 6 inches of clean compost to thin out contaminants.
- Use raised beds and container gardens if you live in an industrial area with a higher risk of environmental pollution or flooding.
- Build your raised beds and container gardens in areas less likely to be flooded.

Reduce your risks after a flood

Follow safe gardening practices to reduce exposure to contaminants

- Wear shoes and gloves when gardening.
- Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water, even if you wore gloves. Use a nail brush to remove dirt.
- Use soap and water to wash surfaces and garden tools that may have touched contaminated plants. After washing, sanitize with a mixture of 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 gallon of water.
- Take off shoes and wipe pet paws at the door to avoid bringing in dirt.
- Change and wash your clothing after gardening.
- Create safe areas for kids to play by covering potentially contaminated dirt with sod, wood chips, or mulch.

Learn more:

Gardening in contaminated soil:

<https://ecology.wa.gov/Spills-Cleanup/Contamination-cleanup/Dirt-Alert-program/Gardening-tips>

King County Dirt Alert:

<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/environmental-health/toxins-air-quality/arsenic-lead/tacoma-smelter-plume.aspx>

Poster: Healthy actions to remove dirt from your home

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