



# What do plants need to grow?

*Just like you, plants in a garden need things to grow and be healthy.*

**Air** has more than one gas that plants use to help them live. Air also helps by drying a plant's leaves and helping to keep it warm or cool.

**Water**, in nature, comes down as rain. If it does not rain, your plant needs *you* to give it water. If you grow a plant under a roof, you also must be the rain and remember to add water to the soil.

**Food**, for a plant, comes two ways.

Roots take up food from the soil. You might add things to the soil to help feed the plant.

Plants also make their own food! Leaves take in sunlight and use it to help the plant make the food it needs. This is called *photosynthesis*.

Words like this are easier to understand if we take them apart.

*Photo* means light, and

*Synthesis* means to put different things together to make a new thing.

Photosynthesis is light helping the plant to put *water* and *carbon dioxide* gas from the air together. This makes food for the plant. There is a bonus for us! The plant makes oxygen for the air we breathe!

**Light** is important for this little solar-powered food factory. A plant growing indoors might even stretch toward a window to get more light!

**Warm temperatures** are important for many plants. Many plants die if it is too cold. Frost on the ground in the morning tells you that it is too cold for these plants to be outside.

Knowing the "last frost date" where you live helps you plan ahead. Check with your County Extension Service.



***You can search** and find the things in the story of MARIGOLD that are helping Marigold and other things grow.*