

Technology helps those without green thumbs

By Allie Caren, NPR

Don't have a green thumb but seeking the therapeutic nature of gardening? Want the convenience and satisfaction of growing your own produce at home? Not to worry: All you need is an electrical outlet, a flat surface and some water.

Meet SproutsIO Inc., a "plug-and-play" user-friendly microfarming appliance for people to easily grow fresh fruits and veggies inside their home or office.

Here's how it works:

The system includes the appliance and seed cartridges. Though the seed options will vary, many of the cartridge choices are things you wouldn't typically find at the grocery store, like black cherry tomatoes.

Once you pop the seed cartridge into the soil-free system, it recognizes what you're trying to grow, and sets an automatic profile for how that plant should be grown.

SproutsIO uses hybrid hydroculture technology, meaning that they have combined the two main types of plant-watering: hydroponics, which involves submerging a plant's roots, and aeroponics, which waters a plant through misting.

Ideally, users will interact with their plants with their mobile device through the SproutsIO app. Users can keep track of their plant's progress (at home or remotely), adjust the lighting or watering to customize the automated profiles, and also interact with others who are using the system.

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