

EASY GARDENING...PLANNING

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A good plan is the first step in establishing a home vegetable garden. Planning includes selecting the garden location; deciding on size and kinds and varieties of vegetables to plant; and determining where, when and how much of each vegetable to plant in the garden.

Site Selection

Choose a place where the soil is loose, rich, level and well-drained. Do not choose low areas where water stands or the soil stays wet. Vegetables will not grow in poorly drained areas.

Do not plant where weeds do not grow; vegetables will not grow well there either.

Vegetables need sunlight to grow well. Do not plant where buildings, trees or shrubs will shade the garden. Most vegetables need at least 6 hours of sunlight daily.

Do not plant vegetables under branches of large trees or near shrubs because they rob vegetables of food and water.

Plant the garden near a water supply if possible. In many areas a garden can grow without watering, but is more likely to be successful if it is irrigated. Water is needed especially during long, dry periods or when planting seeds.

Few people have the perfect garden plot, so look for the best spot possible.

Garden Size

Making the garden too large is one of the most common mistakes made by enthusiastic, first-time gardeners. If the garden is too large, it will be too much work. Consider the following items in deciding on garden size:

Available room. For apartment dwellers, the garden may be a planter box. However, in a suburban or rural area, there may be plenty of ground space for a garden.

Available time. If planning to garden after work, school or on weekends, there may not be enough time to care for a large garden.

Family size. If gardening is a family activity, a large space can be cared for. A larger family also can use more vegetables.

Reason for gardening. If the garden is purely a recreational activity, a container or flower bed garden may be big enough. If growing vegetables for canning or freezing, a bigger area is needed.

Kind of vegetables grown. Some vegetables take a lot of room. Most need at least 3 feet of space between rows. If 10 rows of vegetables are desired, the garden must be 30 feet wide.

Deciding What to Grow

What to grow in the garden is as big a decision as where to locate it. Consider the following points in selecting vegetables to grow:

Space available. Do not plant watermelons in a small garden. They take up too much room. Other vine crops such as cucumbers and cantaloupes can be grown on a trellis or fence.

Expected production from the crop. The smaller the garden, the more important it is to get high production from each row. Small, fast-maturing crops such as radishes, turnips and beets yield quickly and do not require much space. Tomatoes, bush beans, squash and peppers require more space, but produce over a long season.

Table 1. Some vegetables for a small garden

Bush beans	Chard	Onions	Carrots
Tomatoes	Turnips	Lettuce	
Peppers	Beets	Broccoli	
Eggplant	Radishes	Bush squash	

Cost of vegetables if purchased. Plant vegetables which are expensive to buy. Broccoli usually is high priced in the grocery store. It can be grown in most home gardens.

Food value of vegetables. All vegetables are good but some are more nutritious than others.

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Grow different kinds of vegetables to put more variety in the diet.

Personal preference. This is especially important if the garden is purely for recreational or personal enjoyment. Grow vegetables the family likes to eat.

Location of Vegetables in the Garden

Arrange vegetables for most efficient use of space and light. Group tall-growing vegetables such as okra, corn and tomatoes together on the north side of the garden. This reduces shading of smaller vegetables such as bush beans. Group vegetables according to maturity. This makes it easier to replant after removing an early crop such as lettuce or beets. See figure 1.

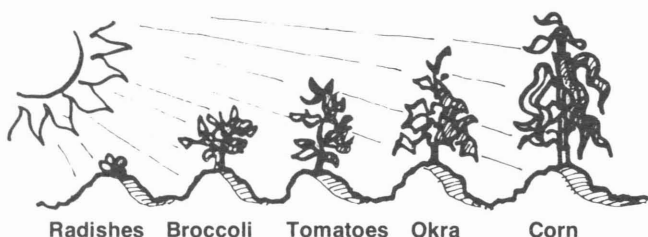


Figure 1

Plant small, fast-maturing vegetables between larger ones. Plant vine crops near a fence or trellis if possible.

Make a drawing on paper to show the location and spacing of vegetables in the garden. See figure 2.

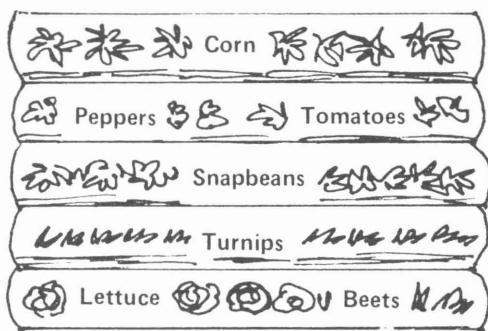


Figure 2

Timing of Planting

Vegetables are divided into two general groups — warm season and cool season. Cool season crops can stand lower temperatures; plant them before the soil warms in the spring. They also can be planted to harvest after the first frost in the fall.

Warm season crops cannot tolerate frost and will not grow when the soil temperature is cool. Plant them after frost in the spring and early enough to mature before frost in the fall.

Table 2. Temperature classification of some vegetables

Cool season		Warm season	
Beets	Greens	Corn	Sauash
Carrots	Radishes	Beans	Cucumbers
Cabbage	Turnips	Okra	Tomatoes
Broccoli	Lettuce	Peppers	Eggplant
Onions	Collards		

Deciding How Much to Plant

Some vegetables produce more than others so fewer plants will be needed. The amount to plant depends on family size, expected production and whether or not freezing or canning is planned. Do not plant too much. Over-planting is wasteful and takes too much work.

Table 3. Amount of some vegetables to plant per person

Vegetable	Use fresh	Preserve
	Approximate amount to plant	
Beets	10 feet	20 feet
Carrots	10 feet	15 feet
Corn	15 feet	50 feet
Bush green beans	15 feet	20 feet
Pole green beans	5 feet	10 feet
Greens	10 feet	10 feet
Leaf lettuce	10 feet	
Okra	6 feet	10 feet
Onions	5 feet	30 feet
Peppers	3 plants	5 plants
Radishes	5 feet	
Squash, summer	2 hills	3 hills
Tomatoes	3 plants	5 plants
Turnips	10 feet	10 feet
Broccoli	4 plants	8 plants
Cucumbers	2 hills	5 hills
Collards	5 feet	10 feet

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