

PLANNING TIPS AND TRICKS

- \$ **Plan your garden on paper** first. Use graph paper to help you lay out the size of your garden site, length of rows, arrangement of crops, spacing between rows and between plants in rows. Be sure you allow space to reach plants for care and harvest.
- \$ **Maintain a list** of varieties to be planted, planting dates and estimated time of maturity and harvest of each crop.
- \$ **Keep a garden diary** of special care and maintenance you provide, problems and solutions, quality and quantity of harvest. These records will help you improve your garden in following years.
- \$ **These vegetables produce a large harvest** in a small space: tomato, radish, lettuce, beans, bush squash, turnip, onion, greens, carrots.
- \$ **These vegetables need lots of space to produce a large crop:** peas potatoes, vine squash, melons, corn, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower.
- \$ **Tomatoes, peppers, squash** and other >fruit= crops must have full sun.
- \$ **Root crops**, like beets and carrots can be grown in light shade.
- \$ **Leafy vegetables** like lettuce and collards will grow in medium shade.

For more information and other helpful educational materials, contact:

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Green Tips

Plant and Grow Guides

Garden Planning (GT105)

Gardening means different things to different people. Thousands view gardening as a relaxing escape from the pressures of work and business. For these people, growing fresh vegetables, herbs, or fruits provides both physical exercise and a great sense of joy and accomplishment. A vegetable garden can also reduce the family's food budget, and it can be a source of hard-to-find vegetables or specific varieties that the family likes. One of the main reasons that people garden is that vegetables from the supermarket cannot compare in taste, nutritional value or freshness with vegetables grown in the home garden.

With proper planning, a vegetable garden can be both functional and attractive. Many gardeners often incorporate ornamental plants such as flowering annuals into the vegetable patch, creating variety and contrast in their home landscaping. Thus gardening can provide recreation, nutrition, healthful exercise and environmental beauty, for people of all ages.

KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL GARDEN

- \$ Select vegetables you and your family like
- \$ Buy varieties recommended for our area (call the Livingston County Extension Office)
- \$ Select your garden site carefully
- \$ Plant at the right time - for soil and air temperature and variety of vegetable
- \$ Use fertilizer for maximum growth and development
- \$ Harvest produce at peak ripeness

START EARLY

- Jan./Feb. - Order seed catalogs
- Feb. - Mar. Order seeds
- Mar/Apr. - Prepare the soil when it is dry enough
- April - Plant cool season crops
- May - Plant warm season crops after danger of frost

SELECT A GARDEN SITE

If you are new to veggie gardening, be careful not to start with too large a space: it is easy to bite off more than you can chew. A nearby area as small as a compact car will give you plenty of fun and delicious produce.

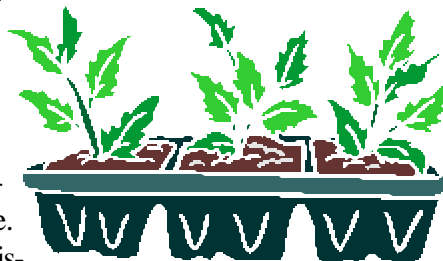
FIVE FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Sunlight - All vegetables need sunlight. Select a site away from the shade of buildings, trees, and shrubs. If your garden does not receive at least 6 hours of sunlight daily, you will not be successful growing vegetables.

Nearness to the house - Select a site close by and visible from your house. You will be able to watch plants grow and will know when to harvest vegetables at their peaks. You are also more likely to keep up with weeding, watering, insect and disease control if the garden is close by.

Soil - You do not need to have ideal soil to grow a good garden. If possible the soil should be fertile and easy to till, with just the right texture **B**a loose, well drained loam. Heavy clay and sandy soils can be improved by adding organic matter.

Water - Including rain and irrigation, the garden needs at least 1 inch of water per week. Therefore, you should locate the garden near a plentiful water source. Carrying heavy watering cans long distances can discourage the most avid gardener!



GOOD AIR DRAINAGE

Avoid locating the garden in a low spot such as the base of a hill or the foot of a slope. These areas trap cold air and are slow to warm in the spring. Gardens planted on high ground are more likely to escape light freezes, allowing an earlier start in the spring and a longer harvest in the fall.

PLAN THE GARDEN

The first step in planning your garden is selecting the vegetables you want to grow. With a few exceptions, you can plant what you like. Only a few vegetables may be unsuitable because of space limitations, improper climate, or unusually poor growing conditions.

The second step is to draw a diagram of the garden sites. The diagram should show the kind of vegetables to be planted, the distance between rows, and the time of planting. Including dates will help you remember tasks that might otherwise be put off until too late.

PURCHASE THE SEED

Experienced gardeners buy most of their seed through seed catalogs. Catalogs offer many varieties and tell you which varieties are better for canning, freezing or eating raw. They also provide lots of information about when to plant, growth habits, expected yield and number of days to maturity.

COOL SEASON CROPS (plant early)

Cabbage, radish, lettuce, beets, cauliflower, onions, peas, broccoli
Frost temperatures (32 degrees) will not injure these crops. Plant seeds outside in April. We eat the roots, stems, leaves or very young flowers of most cool season crops.

WARM SEASON CROPS

Tomatoes, peppers, squash, cucumbers, corn, pumpkins

These crops will be injured by a frost. Do not plant these seeds or transplants outside until sometime in May, after the frost-free date. We eat the fruit of most warm season crops.