

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY GROW VEGETABLES

Growing your own vegetables is fun, easy and rewarding. Fresh picked vegetables from your own garden are tastier and more nutritious than store bought vegetables. And, vegetables really grow themselves; all you have to do is help them out a little so they can be their best. Just follow the advice below to help you get the most out of your vegetable garden.

Choosing A Location For Your Vegetable Garden

The purpose of the home vegetable garden is to provide fresh vegetables for the table; therefore it should be located near the house and especially close to the kitchen. The area should be in full sun; avoid areas that are shaded by trees, buildings or other structures. The soil should drain well, where water does not sit in puddles for any length of time. Although a rich loamy soil is ideal, poor soils can be very productive with the addition of organic matter such as compost, fertilizer and, if needed, lime.

When To Plant Vegetables

In general, vegetables are divided into two major groups – cool season and warm season – that determine when they are to be planted.

Cool Season Vegetables

Cool season vegetables prefer and do best if planted when daytime temperatures are around 60-65 degrees F. and will tolerate some light frost. Cool season vegetables are planted outdoors beginning in late March through early May. These vegetables are harvested late June through July before the heat of the summer. For a fall harvest, a second planting of cool season vegetables

can be planted from early June to mid-August for harvest in late October through November or later.

Cool season vegetables include:

- ?? Asparagus
- ?? Beets
- ?? Broccoli
- ?? Brussel sprouts
- ?? Cabbage
- ?? Carrots
- ?? Cauliflower
- ?? Collards
- ?? Garlic
- ?? Kale
- ?? Kohlrabi
- ?? Leeks
- ?? Lettuce
- ?? Mustard Greens
- ?? Onions
- ?? Parsnips
- ?? Peas
- ?? Potatoes
- ?? Radishes
- ?? Rutabagas
- ?? Shallots
- ?? Spinach
- ?? Swiss Chard
- ?? Turnips

Warm Season Vegetables

Warm season vegetables like temperatures from 65-80 degrees F. and will not tolerate a frost. The last frost date in our area is usually in early May, so most of these vegetables cannot be safely planted outdoors until after May 15 or so. Even then, and for the following few weeks after planting, be mindful of night time temperatures and be prepared to cover young, tender plants to protect them from frost damage or death.

Warm Season vegetables include:

- ?? Beans
- ?? Cantaloupe
- ?? Cucumbers
- ?? Eggplants
- ?? Okra
- ?? Peppers
- ?? Pumpkins
- ?? Squash
- ?? Sweet Corn
- ?? Sweet Potatoes
- ?? Tomatoes
- ?? Watermelon

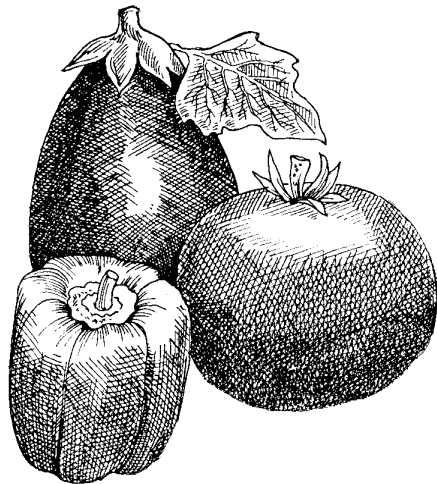


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How To Prepare Your Soil For Vegetables

Good soil preparation before planting will help to guarantee healthy vegetable plants and higher yields at harvest time. To prepare soil for planting follow these steps:

1. First, do a soil pH test to determine how acid (sour) or alkaline (sweet) your soil is. Most vegetables prefer a soil pH between 6.2 and 6.8. Apply lime if pH is below 6.0. (*Bring in a small sample of dry soil and we'll test it for free.*)
2. Work or turn organic matter such as compost or dehydrated cow manure, 5-10-10 vegetable food and lime (if needed; see above) into the soil to a depth of 6 to 8 inches.
3. Rake the area smooth and level breaking up clods and lumps of soil.
4. Plant vegetable plants spacing them according to guidelines on seed packets, labels or reference charts.
5. Water well after planting.



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Tips for Caring for Vegetable Plants through the Growing Season

- ?? Fertilize every 4-6 weeks with 5-10-10.
- ?? Water vegetable gardens only when soil is dry and needs it. Deep but infrequent watering, two or three times a week is best if there is no natural rainfall. Excessive watering may encourage insect and disease problems.
- ?? Use a mulch to prevent weeds, conserve water and cool soil temperatures. Good materials to use as mulch include bark and wood chips, straw, newspaper and black plastic film. Black plastic is especially good for use around tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and beans because it warms the soil for these warm-season crops.
- ?? Some plants, such as tomatoes, will need the extra support of a stake or cage. Cucumbers, pole beans and peas will grow best on a trellis or fence.
- ?? Before using pesticides in the vegetable garden identify the pest and select the least-toxic control for the problem. If you're not sure about a particular problem or its solution bring a sample in to us and we'll be glad to help identify the pest and recommend a remedy. Before using any product, always be sure it's safe to use a product on crops you will eat.

?? For most vegetables, frequent harvesting (picking) will encourage more productivity. The more you pick, the more you get!

To plant vegetables you'll need:

- ?? Compost or Dehydrated Cow Manure
- ?? Lime (determined by soil test)
- ?? 5-10-10 Vegetable Food
- ?? Mulch
- ?? Stakes or Cages
- ?? Twine
- ?? Spading Fork
- ?? Level Headed Rake

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