

# VEGETABLE GARDENING

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When planning a vegetable garden, first make a list of the vegetables you are interested in growing. Plant what you want to eat. Sketch the garden on paper to determine how much room will be needed. See the Dundee Fact Sheet called "Spring Garden Guide". This sheet has a vegetable guide on the back that will show you proper spacing. Limit the garden to a size you can maintain properly.

Run the rows in an east-west direction to keep the rows from shading each other. Plan the taller crops for the north side. Perennial crops such as asparagus, rhubarb, or strawberries should be planted where they can be left undisturbed. Consider adding a few flowers to attract valuable pollinating insects. If the garden is large, consider adding concrete stepping pads to aid in maintenance.

Use space-saving techniques to boost yield. Vertical gardening of crops such as pole beans and tomatoes is very successful. Vining crops such as cucumbers and melons can grow on a chain link fence. Heavy fruit can be supported by making slings from netting or old panty hose.

Interplanting is another way to increase yield. Fast-growing crops such as radishes can be sown between slow-growing crops such as cabbage. Other good combinations are leaf lettuce with cauliflower or basil with tomatoes.

Lettuce, spinach, radishes, and peas are cool-season crops that mature early. Once they are done, you can replant green beans, beets, or turnips in their place.

Rotate the location of specific crops yearly to control diseases and insects.

Consider planting short rows of a particular vegetable at one-week intervals instead of a long row all planted at once. This will lengthen the harvest season and won't swamp you with more produce than you need at one time.

The garden will need at least 6-8 hours of good sun daily. Well-drained soil is also important. Soil can be improved with peat moss, manure, fertilizer, and compost. The soil should be free of rocks.

Wait until after the last frost in the spring to do your major planting. A few vegetables, such as broccoli and spinach, can be planted earlier, but some varieties, such as peppers and tomatoes, are very cold sensitive.

Keeping the garden free of weeds and diseased plants will go a long way toward keeping the garden healthy. Shady, cool, and/or too moist gardens are havens for disease. Don't water the garden so late in the day that the plants stay wet after dark. Place the garden in a location where it will receive good air circulation without it being too windy.

Investigate sickly looking plants immediately. Watch for plants that are stunted, weak, or keel over. Leaves that are holey, yellow, or pale should be cause for concern.

Many garden problems are caused by improper cultural practices - too wet, too dry, etc. If a chemical cure is necessary, read label directions carefully, especially concerning how long you have to wait from spraying to harvest. Don't assume that all insects are harmful. Some, such as ladybugs and praying mantis, eat harmful insects without doing any damage themselves.

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