

VEGETABLE GARDENING: 101



DREAM BIG – START SMALL

SOIL: a living organism

- bacteria
- fungus
- insects



Keeping the soil healthy is a high priority

- pH
- macronutrients
 - nitrogen
 - phosphorus
 - potassium
- micronutrients

MAINTAINING SOIL

- Tilling
- Compost added spring/fall
- Physically check moisture
- Mulching





PLANNING YOUR GARDEN

- Garden journals
- Companion planting
- Spacing
- Walkways/paths
- Avoiding light encroachment
- Grouping for easier harvest and protection

GARDEN JOURNALS

- Include
 - Dates
 - Latin/common names
 - Weather conditions
 - Plant damage/solutions
 - Map
 - Successes/failures



COMPANION PLANTING

- Mix of science and folklore
 - Attract beneficial insects
 - Repel detrimental insects
 - Improve flavor

Ex:

Tomatoes ♥ basil, onions carrots

Tomatoes ✗ corn and potatoes

but...

Corn ♥ peas, beans and gourds

SPACING

- melons, squash and gourds take up enormous amount of room
- some plants come in “bush” or “vining” or “climbing”
- Some plants start small and grow huge



LIGHT

- most vegetable plants need 8 hours of sunlight
- some tolerant of a little shade
- imagine plant at full height
- try not to shadow your own sun-lovers or a neighbors plot



SEED or SEEDLING?

From Seed:

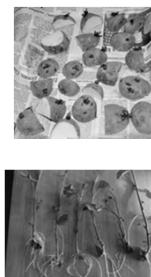
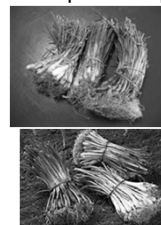
- beans
- cucumbers
- root vegetables
- squash, melon
- corn
- cilantro
- lettuce, kale, chard

From Seedling:

- peppers
- tomatoes
- basil
- parsley
- eggplant
- fennel
- broccoli
- cabbage

OTHER:

- onion sets
- leek sets
- seed potatoes
- sweet potato slips



PERENNIALS

Many of the common culinary herbs used are perennials.

You can still grow them by planting in pots and digging up in fall.

- oregano
- thyme
- chives
- mints
- marjoram

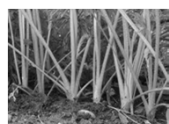
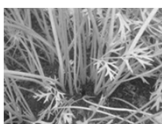


EASIEST VEGGIES FOR BEGINNERS

- cucumbers
- carrots
- green beans
- lettuce
- spinach
- kale
- Swiss chard
- tomatoes
- peppers
- summer squash
- winter squash
- basil
- peas
- cabbage
- radishes
- onions

PLANTING SEEDS

- SPACING!!!
- depth of seed
- gentle watering
 - no high pressure
 - avoid over watering
- thinning
 - by hand
 - seed tape



PLANTING SEEDLINGS

- check for bound roots
- prepare hole slightly wider and deeper than root ball
- place in center, pack soil around
- firmly pat down soil
- water gently and thoroughly



MULCHING

Why do it?

- keeps weeds down
- retains moisture
- adds organic matter

Types:

- wood
- cardboard
- newspaper (not the glossy kind)
- non-chemically treated grass clippings
- plastic
- straw (not hay)



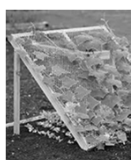
MAINTENANCE

- at the beginning: PATIENCE!
- thinning
- weeding
- watering
- observing
 - plants need support?
 - bugs or disease?
- harvest

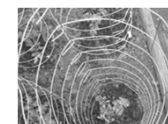
Ask for help if you find something you don't understand.

TRELLISING/CAGES/STAKES

- trellising for climbing plants:
 - cucumbers
 - pole beans
 - peas
- placement
- must be removable
- tomatoes need cages
- peppers, eggplants; basil can be staked for support



more examples:



store-bought are good but you can easily DIY!

LAYOUT

- square foot gardening:

Divide part or all of your allotted space into squares with 1 foot on each side, or 2 feet...

- can fit a lot into a smaller space
- need to mulch, compost and weed intensively
- plan carefully to reach entire harvest
- stops "over-producing"
- less compaction of soil



LAYOUT

- traditional linear gardening

- using stakes and rope to make straight lines
- walkways between rows



With both methods keep crop rotation in the back of your mind

FENCING

- must be removable
- plan well and only do part of the plot
- rascally rabbits!



THEME GARDENS

Don't know what to plant? Here are some ideas:

- salsa garden
- salad garden
- pizza garden
- child friendly garden



AESTHETICS

- consider edible flowers
- minimize decorations
- keep plot weeded
- plan ahead



Not the look we are striving for!! Keep the weeds pulled!



MULTIPLE PLANTINGS

Some plants fare better in early summer. Some can be planted multiple times.

- early plants
 - lettuce, peas, broccoli, radishes, beans
- late – for fall harvest plant late July
 - 2nd lettuce crop
 - 2nd radish crop
- can have up to 3 successive bean plantings!

FERTILIZING

- Synthetic Fertilizer
 - understanding: ex 20-5-10
 - 20 = nitrogen (N)
 - 5 = phosphorous (P)
 - 10 = potassium (K)
- this area most commonly lacking N
- P and K sufficient or excessive
- legumes will “fix” N
- synthetic fertilizer will eventually affect soil and microbes

FERTILIZER

- **Organic fertilizer**
 - not as “strong” as synthetic fertilizers
 - can improve soil structure over time
 - processed organic fertilizer: blood meal, bone meal, seaweed extracts,
 - natural organic fertilizer: manure, guano, seaweed, worm castings

Fertilizers do not add nutrition or improve flavor of crop. They are meant to provide missing or lacking nutrients for plant growth and health.

SOIL ORGANIC MATTER (OM)

- compost or other natural materials added to the soil that amends it over time
 - helps maintain good soil structure
 - provides food for beneficial microorganisms
 - holds nutrients in “bank” in low concentrations
 - holds micronutrients for plant uptake
 - helps buffer pH changes

coming to TERMS

Hybrid Seeds/Seedlings

- created from crossing different varieties to get best features of both
- in general, seeds cannot be saved that will germinate or produce plants identical to parents

Don't confuse hybrid with GMO or genetically modified organisms!

coming to TERMS

Heirloom Seeds/Seedlings

- handed down from generation to generation
- seeds can be saved and produce plants identical to parent plant

Open Pollinated (OP)

- plants capable of producing seeds that will germinate

All heirlooms are OP, but not all OP are heirloom – some hybrids are OP as well



COMMON ISSUES

PESTS

- insect
 - slugs, Japanese Beetles, cabbage root flies, ants, aphids, cutworm
- furry and feathery
 - rabbits, woodchucks, voles, moles, mice, birds, chipmunks
- over/under watering
- weather damage
- weed control



In Short...

- dream big but start small
- plant what you love to eat
- remember the 1" per week of water
- harvest often
- weed, weed, weed
- mulch



Don't ever get too discouraged. Ask questions and have fun growing your own healthy produce!!