

Plan vegetables for multiple harvests

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Garden Writer

Something good to eat, that's the reward of a vegetable garden. Gardening goals can hardly compare to the taste of a ripe red tomato from the vine.

A good vegetable garden provides sufficient vegetables for immediate consumption and sufficient surplus for later (winter) consumption.

A garden area 25 by 50 feet can fill the needs of a family of five.

If you have simpler goals to supplement the salad bowl, a 10-foot square plot of ground will produce a series of crops for you.

Start with leaf and bibb lettuce. Add a couple of rows of onion sets and a

row of radishes. Stagger plantings to prolong production.

After harvesting, the ground should be warm. Set out four to six tomato plants and a couple of green peppers. Plant onion sets around the edge.

When using the soil for repeated crops, nutrients must be replaced. Use a complete fertilizer (10-10-10) between plantings. Lettuce can use a little extra nitrogen and like tomatoes, needs plenty of phosphorus and potash.

Seeds of the following can be planted this month: brussel sprouts, carrot, cauliflower, chard, chervil, chives, collards, cress, kale, leeks, head lettuce, leaf lettuce, parsley, peas and salsify. Onion sets, rhubarb and asparagus roots can also be put out.

(If you have seeds left from last year they may still be viable. Most seeds live more than a year under dark, cool and dry storage conditions. If in doubt, discard old seed. See chart for seed-life of common vegetables.)

Here's a method of determining the exact size of your vegetable garden: Place your sprinkler in the approximate center of a sunny spot. A sprinkler with an oblong pattern is best. When ground is thoroughly soaked, the outline of your garden will be set by the outer limits of the sprinkler pattern. It ensures maximum use of your water.

Plan to maximize yield. For instance, taller plants should be put to the north side of the bed to keep short ones from possible shading.

Large plants need wider spacing 18 inches to 2 feet, more compact plants, 12-18 inches. If garden is large enough, leave a path to be covered with sand. Otherwise use a 5-foot by 5-inch plank when you need to get into a row and the ground is wet or muddy.

Mulches are important to vegetables as to other plants. The type of mulch determines the depth needed: fine-grained ones such as sawdust should be applied at a two-inch depth. Others can be put on as thickly as four to six inches.

For best results, wait until the soil is warm in June and start with a half-inch layer of sand, to keep down slug population. Next add a light layer of fertilizer to keep mulch from depleting soil as it decomposes. (A handful to every four to five feet of plant row should do.) Finally, add four to six inches of clippings, compost and/or other organic matter.

Keep all early clippings, grass, etc.,

for use as mulch rather than compost. They have a much higher nitrogen content than those produced in hotter weather. (Nitrogen dissipates in hot weather.) Used in mulch, clippings yield the most possible nitrogen.

Seed life of vegetables

Seed	Years
Beans	3
Beets	5
Broccoli	4
Cabbage	4
Carrots	3
Celery	3
Chard	5
Corn	3
Cucumber	5
Eggplant	4
Endive	10
Endive, Belgian	8
Kohlrabi	5
Leek	3
Herbs, most	3
Lettuces	5
Melons	4-5
Mustard	4
Okra	4
Onions	2
Parsley	1
Parsnips	1
Peas	3
Peppers	2
Radishes	4
Rhubarb	3
Salsify	1
Squash	4
Tomatoes	6-7
Turnips	4

Vegetables and their characteristics

ROOT CROPS

Sow seed directly in soil, few problems.

CARROT

Matures in two months, good value. Plant early and at mid-winter for two crops.

BEET

Matures in one and a half months. Benefits from a deep well-drained soil.

TURNIP

Matures in two months. Yield is good, keeps well, a few go a long way.

ONION

From seed, matures in 3-4 months. Sets, couple of weeks to 2 months. If crop is sufficient allow some to go to seed. Stores well in a dry, cool place.

LEEK

Easily grown. If heavily mulched (8-8 inches) can be dug throughout winter.

FRUITING CROPS From seed or plant

CANTALOUPE & WATERMELON

Matures in 3 months. Requires much space. Try dwarf or midget varieties, which have a shorter maturation.

CORN

Use only dwarf varieties which mature in two to three months. Don't mulch, plants love heat. Fertilize well (10-10-10 with extra nitrogen in late summer) as they are heavy feeders.

BUSH BEAN

Matures in 50-60 days. Bears for about two weeks, plant successively.

SUMMER SQUASH

Matures in 2 months, yields well.

WINTER SQUASH

Matures in 3-4 months. Takes up space. Try a dwarf for midget variety.

TOMATO

Matures in 1 1/2-2 1/2 months. Produces until killing frost. Heavy feeder of phosphorus and potash. Roots may extend to depth of 4 feet.

CUCUMBER

Matures in 50-60 days. Requires space. Fickling only method of storing.

OTHER CROPS From seed or plant

LETTUCE

Matures in 40-60 days; successive planting needed. Season can be prolonged by picking outer mature leaves instead of pulling up plant or shirring it. Heavy feeder especially nitrogen.

BRUSSEL SPROUTS

Mature in 3 months. Keeps producing until frost. Subject to aphids.

CABBAGE

Matures in 2 1/2-3 months. Does best in cool weather as early or late crop. Benefits from lime. Subject to insect damage.

BROCCOLI

Matures in 3 months produce until killing frost. Subject to insect damage.

CAULIFLOWER

Matures in 3 months use thick mulch in summer. Subject to insect damage.

SWISS CHARD

Matures in 50-60 days. Produces throughout season. Best results obtained with humusy soil and ample nitrogen.

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Similar to Swiss Chard

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