

Vegetable and Herb Gardening Workshop Outline

PLANNING

- Examine your reasons for growing a vegetable garden and be reasonable about what you hope to achieve.
- Vegetables need more from the soil than other plants, so you must prepare it properly
- Our enriched topsoil has proven to be an excellent garden soil just as it is, already has mushroom compost mixed in and drains very well.

DECISIONS

- Choose a site for the garden
 - Should be fairly level, but not at the bottom on an incline where water will stand in puddles after a heavy rain.
 - Be sure it is away from tree and shrub roots which compete for space and nutrients in the soil, and trees may cast too much shade on the garden.
 - Your spot should have at least 6 hours of direct sun per day
- Beginners should think small
 - A 10' x 10' garden will be very productive without being a burden
- Diagram
 - First, when you plan what you grow this year and in what location, you'll know what quantities to plant
 - Second, you will know which crops to locate next to each other.
 - Keep a notebook of how your locations worked and make notes of improvements for next year.
 - Rotate – it is important to rotate crops from year to year, this helps avoid soil and insect problems that result from repeated plantings of the same crops in the same areas.

CHECKLIST

1. Plant the tallest-growing vegetables at the north end of the garden, so they do not shade shorter plants.
2. Rotate vegetables every year
3. Check spacing, close spacing leaves little room for weeds, but leave more space if you wish to use a tiller to keep space between rows weed free.
4. Plan paths for walking and working in the garden, this eliminates compaction of soil where roots are.
5. Group long-season crops together. The bed will need to be prepared only once; it can be harvested and finally plowed under all at once.
 - Long season crops include: cucumber, eggplant, peppers, pole beans, sweet potatoes, chard and tomatoes
6. Group short season crops together and for more convenient succession planting.
 - Short season crops include: radishes, lettuce, beets, carrots, bush beans, and peas.
7. In a small garden, growing vine crops up a trellis or fence saves ground space.
8. Most vegetable crop matures at about the same time. If you can't use 50 radishes all at once, plant some now, some in the next two weeks, and then again two weeks later to lengthen the harvest time. This is called succession planting. Some varieties of

lettuce mature at different times but can be planted at the same time for a continuous harvest.

STYLES OF VEGETABLE GARDENING

TRADITIONAL:

There should be nothing ugly about a vegetable garden, take pride in your efforts.

- A traditional vegetable garden is laid out in rows which are spaced far enough apart to allow one person to walk between them in order to weed, water and harvest the produce.
- Suggestion for the NEW gardener would be to follow Burpee's Best Vegetable Garden Plan SEE DIAGRAM 1 (eliminate and substitute your favorites if necessary)

ORNAMENTAL GARDEN:

- It is not necessary to hide your garden in the far reaches of the lawn
- Vegetables and flowers can be combined in a garden that is both functional and ornamental
- Example: Marigolds repel harmful pests so by using them as a companion planting you are encouraging a beneficial relationship between one plant and another.
- Companion planting can be thought of in terms of beauty also; use parsley to edge a flower bed, or the tall ferny foliage of carrots and dill look nice surrounded by shorter flowers.
- Many root vegetables (carrots, radishes, beets) have interesting foliage and can be planted among your flowers and when you harvest the vegetables you allow more room for the flowers to spread and grow.
- Try a mix of vegetables, flowers and even perennials in a border planting, the different colors of foliage and textures will enhance each other and provide a beautiful border planting.

RAISED BEDS:

- Featured in our newsletter
- Many benefits: soil warms faster, better drainage, fewer weeds, and more abundant harvest, better for root crops because of "deeper soil"
- You can mound soil for a raised bed or make a permanent structure.
- Make sure that the bed is no wider than twice the distance you can reach, you can work the bed from either side without having to stand on and compress the soil.
- A raised garden can be a single bed, a series of beds or a mix of different, geometrically shaped beds arranged to fit neatly into your growing area.

CONTAINER GARDENING

- Great for gardeners with small yards, terraces, decks, patios.
- Large pots or tubs can accommodate tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, eggplant, herbs etc.

- Make sure you have at least 6-8 hours of sunlight for your containers.
- They may even do better in containers than in the ground because of better soil.
- Vegetables that need support or trellises can be grown in containers too, anchor the planting stakes in the pot or place the pot next to a wall with a trellis, netting, or lattice attached.
- No matter what size your container it will be more attractive if something is spilling over the edges.
- Mix and Match – grow radishes and lettuce around a tomato, when it is time to harvest the radishes you can add basil. This pot will have three salad ingredients throughout the growing season.
- Care is easy, do not over water and fertilize to keep plants healthy.

CHILDRENS GARDEN

- The miracle of seeds always impresses a child.
- Easy ideas
 1. Radishes only take 4 weeks from planting time to harvest
 2. Sunflowers can tower over a child in only 8 weeks
 3. Start seeds indoors and watch them grow
 4. Make a cool scarecrow
 5. Observe the wildlife in the garden (toads, ladybugs, butterflies, caterpillars, japanese beetles.
 6. Let a zucchini grow to the size of a baseball bat
 7. Grow a cucumber in a narrow necked bottle. (shade the bottle)
 8. Kids love the funny names of some of the vegetables.

PREPARING THE SOIL

- Like all living things, plants need air, water and sunshine. Two of these things reach the plants through the soil, the better the soil the better the harvest
- Prepare the initial soil the rototilling to a depth of 8” – 10”. This loosens and aerates the soil, this can be done in the fall.
- Top dress the garden with a good garden soil mix and till again. (Our enriched topsoil has proven to be a excellent garden soil just by itself.
- If you have dug away some of the lawn to make your vegetable plot, be sure to remove all of the grass as it grows quickly and can cause a messy garden and crowd out vegetables.
- pH : For vegetables you will want a reading of between 6 and 7. If you apply lime in the fall or winter the garden soil will have time to adjust and be ready for spring planting.

FERTILIZATION

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