



# Vegetable Gardening the Sustainable Way

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- ✚ Siting your vegetable garden:
  - Full sun (6 hours or more)
  - Loamy, well-drained, neutral soil (pH 6.0 to 7.0) - 18" deep
  - Open area, but not too windy
- ✚ Size to your needs (snacking, canning, etc.) - don't oversize
- ✚ Make a plan: type of vegetables, number of plants, full size of plants
- ✚ Two types of gardens:
  - Conventional: Rows of single vegetables, paths in between
    - Easier, cheaper to establish; lots of paths
    - Requires lots of space, fertilizer & water
  - Intensive: Wide rows of multiple vegetables; deep beds
    - Greater initial effort; difficult to move
    - Requires less space, fertilizer & water
    - Bigger crop yields, better weed & pest control
    - Raised bed, mounded bed, double dig
- ✚ Removing turf: mulch/layering, rototiller, shovel, glyphosate
- ✚ Amending soil: get soil test, correct pH, add organic matter, add missing nutrients
- ✚ Starting seeds indoors:
  - 6-8 weeks before first frost (Mothers Day)
  - Sterile, soil-less mixture
  - 16 hours of cool fluorescent hours per day, 1" above leaves
  - Keep moist, but not wet
  - "Harden" seedlings off in light shade or cold frame
- ✚ Planting
  - Companion planting
  - Group by similar needs
  - Crop rotation (not always practical in small gardens)
  - Taller plants to north
  - Succession (early crops, then late crops)
- ✚ Saving space
  - Uses trellises and fences (plant "up" not "out")
  - Interplant short w/ tall, heavy feeders with light feeders
  - Multiple rows of same vegetables close together
  - Deep soil allows closer spacing
- ✚ Choose variety based on intended use, flavor, disease/pest resistance, heirloom if desired, cultural requirements, etc.
- ✚ Weed control: prepare beds in Fall, don't till in Spring, plant seedlings when possible, plant close together, mulch
- ✚ Use "airy" mulch: straw; shredded leaves, roots, or bark; clippings
- ✚ Work organic matter in deep at start, maintain layer of finished compost on top, use manure tea or fish emulsion as boosters
- ✚ Use complete, balanced fertilizer with higher phosphate (P) and potash (K) than nitrogen (N) and secondary nutrients (calcium, magnesium, sulfur)
- ✚ Garden maintenance: water, weed, monitor for pests/diseases, mulch
- ✚ Use Integrated Pest Management techniques for pest control
- ✚ Remove dead vegetation and fallen fruits, harvest regularly
- ✚ Preparing garden for winter: remove all dead plant material, lightly fork in amendments, apply compost, water, mulch