

PLANTING A VEGETABLE GARDEN

Homegrown vegetables have a flavor unmatched by those you buy. And even a small garden can produce enough to be worthwhile.

Choosing a Site

The basic requirements for a vegetable patch are an open area with good drainage, plenty of sunlight (6 or more hours a day) and a nearby supply of water. Choosing the size of your garden should depend on how much time you wish to devote and the number of people you plan to feed. A 300 sq. ft. garden will adequately feed a family of four.

Planning Your Garden

Succession plantings of fast-growing crops will add to the yield of your garden. Use 2-week intervals for staggered plantings. Also, start with the vegetables that stay in the ground the longest (70 days or more) and plant cool-season or short-term warm-season plants around them. Tall crops, like corn, should be planted so as not to shade smaller plants. And, sprawling crops, like melons, require ample growing space. Remember to rotate crops each year to different locations so as not to deplete the soil of certain nutrients. Ask one of our staff if you aren't sure

what to rotate where.

Analyze Your Site

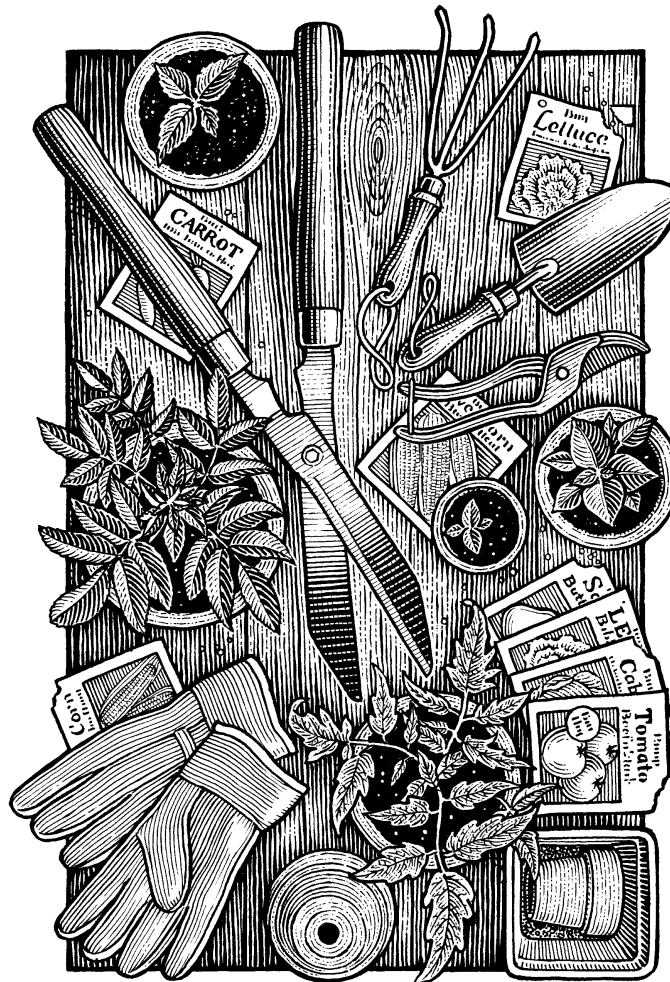
To determine exactly what the soil in your garden needs, you must take a soil test. At Primex, we offer *Penn State Soil Tests* that takes 2-

3 weeks to get a detailed analysis. Our staff will help you read the results and determine what to add to your soil and how much. Generally, a pH of 6.0 to 7.0 is acceptable for vegetable gardening. If your pH is lower than this, your soil is too acidic and requires lime to be added. If your soil is low in organic matter, it will often have a high pH level. You will want to add organic matter such as humus, dehydrated manure or composted manure. All plants require a proper balance of nutrients - nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Soils lacking any one of these elements will not produce healthy plants. Therefore, you will need to add a

well-balanced fertilizer like 5-10-5, 10-10-10 or *Espoma Garden-tone*.

Preparing the Site

Remove debris and skin off any turf using a shovel or spade. Loosen the soil and throw off to the side of the row. Redig the same location, turning the soil in place. Use a gardening fork to break up and turn the soil. Break up clods so that



there are none larger than the size of an apple. At this point, organic amendments should be added. After the entire area is finished, rake the beds to remove any remaining clods. Be sure the soil is not too wet, or soil will become more compacted. The soil is just right when a handful easily breaks apart in your hand.

Planting

When planting in early spring, plant during the warmest part of the day. Once in the garden, protect seedlings from wind, sun, frosts and insects. *Reemay*, a light fabric, will help keep moisture in and also protect from cold and frost.

This can also be used during the summer months to protect young cool-season plants from the heat. The *Wall-o-water* can also be used to protect individual plants from cold night temperatures, and plants will mature much faster. The water stored in these plastic frames store heat from the sun's rays during the day to provide insulation at night. When watering, remember to water around the plant rather than on top so as not to damage your seedlings.

Vegetable Gardening

Planting Dates	Critical Times to Water	When to Fertilize	Companion Plants
Beans, 4/15-6/7 seed, outside	When flowers form and during pod-forming and picking	After heavy bloom and set of pods	carrots, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, lettuce, pea, radish, savory, tansy
Broccoli, 3/7-31 seed or plants, outside	Continually for 4 weeks after transplanting	Three weeks after transplanting	beans (bush), beets, celery, onion, tomato, strong herbs
Cabbage, 3/7-4/15 seed or plants, outside	Frequently in dry weather	Three weeks after transplanting	beans (bush), beets, celery, onion, tomato, strong herbs
Cauliflower, 3/15-4/7 seed or plants, outside	Frequently	Three weeks after transplanting	beans (bush), beets, celery, onion, tomato, strong herbs
Corn, 4/1-17 seed, outside	When tassels form and when cobs swell	When 8-10 inches tall and again when silk first appears	beans, cucumbers, melon, pea, squash
Cucumbers, 5/7-6/15 seed, outside	Frequently	One week after blossoming and again three weeks later	beans, corn, lettuce, onion, pea, radish
Onion Sets, 3/1-31 seed or sets, outside	In early stage if weather is dry	When bulbs begin to swell and again when plants are one foot tall	beets, cabbage, carrots, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, pepper, squash, strawberry, tomato, savory
Peas, 3/7-31 seed, outside	When flowers form and during pod-forming and picking	After heavy bloom and set of pods	beans, carrots, corn, cucumbers, radish, turnips
Potatoes, 4/1-30 sets, outside	When the size of marbles	At blossom time or time of second hilling	horseradish, thyme
Squash (all types), 5/7 - 6/15 seed or plants, outside	Frequently	Just before vines start to run, when plants are about one foot tall	corn, onions, radish
Tomatoes, 5/7-30 plants, outside	For 3 to 4 weeks after transplanting and when flowers and fruit form.	1 to 2 weeks before first picking and again two weeks after first picking	cabbage, carrots, celery, onion, mint