



**Don't Buy "Veggies" Grow Your Very Own
without Harmful Pesticides... Even In
Tight Spaces!**

-Green Thumb Not Required-



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Garden Resources

#1. A Basic Guide to Growing Vegetables

Growing your own vegetables is a great idea, but be prepared to work, because those vegetables will not grow themselves. You will be required to make some advance plans before you start growing your own vegetables. Enjoy the many benefits of growing your own vegetables and the gardening experience as a whole.

The following are a few basic factors you will need to consider for your vegetable garden. There are others no doubt, but it's a learning experience and you will learn as you do your research.

Site: it is very important to know what factors to consider that will help you choose the right site for your garden. The location you choose will directly impact the kind of vegetables you produce in your garden. The site you choose

should have the right soil, which needs to be healthy and moist. Often we cannot do much about the soil that's already in the garden, but you can always select a spot where the soil is at its best. The site should receive full sun at least eight hours each day. This is a must for your vegetable garden to prosper. Choose an area that gets the necessary sunlight and has good soil.

Water: the garden is going to require plenty of water; some plants will require more than others. Some vegetable plants can die very quickly if the soil dries out, so the water supply needs to be right there when you need it. If you can locate your site near the water source it would be ideal. However, if it is not possible, don't worry. Locating your site to get the best sunlight is a more important criterion.

Seasons: study up on the different seasonal vegetables because planting at the right time is essential. Winter months are never a good time to plant vegetables. Generally early spring is quite suitable for planting a good many vegetables, but it will ultimately depend on the type of vegetable itself.

Mulching may not sound like much, but it is an important factor for a vegetable garden. Examples of mulch include grass clippings, wood bark chips and stones. Mulch is very useful for helping in soil water retention; it increases the soil's ability to retain water. It is useful in covering delicate plants to protect them from cold winds. The use of mulch will also enhance the appearance of your vegetable garden, making the beds look clean and tidy.

There are other factors like soil types, fertilization methods, creating a compost pile and more that you will need to learn about to successfully grow your own vegetables.

#2. A Tomato Grower's Tip

Tomatoes are probably one of the most versatile of all vegetables. They are used in a variety of ways to add flavor to culinary dishes. Growing your own tomatoes from seed is a great idea and knowing how to grow them only requires a bit of time and effort.

However, with just a little bit of extra attention paid to learning how to grow tomatoes properly, you can significantly increase your yields. Tomatoes are easy to grow from seed and do well enough in any sized garden. Choosing a variety that will suit the space you have is an essential consideration to get great tomatoes.

To grow tomatoes from seed you will require: fresh seeds, seed starting trays - get plastic ones or use Styrofoam egg trays, seed starting mix, potting mix or all purpose fertilizer, disposable cups - 16 ounce plastic ones, light source like a fluorescent shop light.

Buying the seeds: you can choose to buy either online or from your local garden store. If you go the online route, order at least two to three months before your planting date - no harm having them handy in advance!

When to plant: you can't scatter seeds on garden soil when the weather is warm and hope they will grow. You have to plant your seeds eight weeks before the last frost. You will have to look up the dates for the last frost as relevant to your area. Talk to the people at the local garden store, they are usually a big help.

Start out with a good quality potting compost; this is one investment you don't want to skimp on. The main growing soil is usually a mix of quality soil or compost and rich organic waste like peat moss or rotted manure.

The soil should have good drainage ability or you will end up with a lot of dead plants. Vegetable plants need to stay moist not wet. You can add lime to the main soil. If you can get them, a couple of handfuls of crushed oyster shells should do the trick. Adding lime, which is calcium prevents dry-end rot.

Trim off the lower branches from each plant and make sure to plant deeply. The stem should be part buried. Water the freshly planted seeds very gently as splashing is quite likely to dislodge them.

Bigger pots equate to bigger tomatoes because the plants have more freedom to grow in big pots. Don't make the mistake of tying the plants to support them when they start growing. Opt instead for a tomato cage or spiral.

#3. About Hydroponic Gardening

You may have heard the term hydroponics and wondered what it means. Alternatively, you may have heard about soil-less gardening and tried to figure out how that could be possible. In a word, it is hydroponics. You will find all the information you need to know about hydroponics and how it can help you in growing your own vegetables.

The term hydroponics comes from the Greek 'hydro' meaning water and 'ponics' which refers to labor. Actually soil-less gardening has been around for thousands of years. Remember one of the seven natural wonders of the world - the hanging gardens of Babylon? That's a prime example of one of the earliest examples of hydroponics in history.

Countries around the world from Holland to Australia have been experimenting with hydroponics and witnessed some amazing crop production results.

Hydroponic gardening has several advantages over traditional soil gardening. Plant growth rate increases by 30 to 50 percent when compared to soil plant growth rate. Plant yield is also much higher. Scientists believe that extra oxygen found in the hydroponic system, helps to stimulate root growth. Plants with higher oxygen levels in the root tend to absorb nutrients faster. Nutrients are mixed with the water and go directly to the root system. The nutrients get delivered several times in one day. Because the plant does not need a lot of energy to find and break down food, it sends the spare energy to the fruit, speeding up production.

Hydroponics also prevents bug infestations, disease and funguses. The plants tend to be healthier with this system.

Nutrients in hydroponics follow almost all the principles of regular soil fertilizers. Hydroponic nutrient solutions contain the same elements you would get from the soil. You can buy these products from specialist hydroponic supply stores. All you need to do is add two to four tablespoons of concentrated nutrient liquid or powder mix, to a gallon of water.

There are different growing mediums for the hydroponic gardening system. The growing mediums are based on the principle of aerating and supporting the root system. There are different growing mediums suited to the different types of hydroponic systems like the continuous drip system, nutrient film technique system and the ebb and flow system.

Hydroponic gardening is a futuristic technology that is at present being studied not just in countries, but in classrooms, horticultural societies and government funded research projects.

It is an interesting concept and well worth consideration by anyone who wants to grow their own vegetables.

#4. Accident Free Vegetable Growing Tips

Gardening injuries are too numerous to count; thousands of people end up in emergency departments across the country each year because of injuries sustained in the garden. The garden can actually be a very dangerous place if you are careless and show little regard for your own safety.

Do you own a lawn mower? That's the number one cause of gardening accidents it would appear. The lawnmower is a very dangerous piece of equipment. You will never believe what the second most dangerous thing in the garden is - the 'harmless' flowerpot! This is followed by falling over gardening implements, cuts and lifting injuries.

Some of the reasons why accidents happen include a lack of

skill or training to get the job done safely, taking shortcuts, ignoring potential risks, not planning and preparing properly. Of course there's just plain bad luck as well, when the proverbial 'in the wrong place at the wrong time' happens!

The following tips on staying safe while gardening may sound too basic for words. However, these pointers are based on facts and it is true that all too often we forget to take the most basic precautions.

- When you plan your garden, do so in a way that eliminates the need for excessive maintenance and lifting
- Get rid of or fix loose pavers, uneven surfaces; do not leave unraveled hose pipes snaking across the vegetables; and put away or gardening implements like rakes and things
- Make sure the surface in your garden provides a good grip for your feet
- Stay out of the garden as much as possible when the weather is wet and the ground slippery
- Always put away your tools especially when you have kids and dogs around, both are equally curious
- Make sure all chemicals and insecticides are safe under lock and key, even the ones that say biodegradable and organic.

- When gardening, use safety equipment like heavy gloves and boots; wear safety goggles and a hard hat if you are building something in the garden
- Always use gloves when you garden; they protect your hands from skin infections, cuts and contaminants
- Use sunscreen when you are gardening, it will protect you from the harmful UV rays of the sun
- If you plan to do a fair bit of gardening when the weather is hot, make sure to drink plenty of fluids. Take breaks and sit in the shade every so often. Dizziness and sunstroke can come on quite suddenly and without warning.

Practicing basic safety when gardening, and taking precautions rather than shortcuts will ensure you have all the fun growing your vegetables without the danger of accidents.

#5. Best Soils and Fertilizer for Vegetables

The best way to get the freshest, tastiest vegetables is to grow your own. In order to grow healthy vegetables, soil and fertilizer are major factors to be given due importance.

Soils

It is important that you check the soil at the time of

selecting the best location for your garden. As part of the soil testing process, simply squeeze a handful of soil in your hand to test the moisture content. Dry as dust soil means you will have to put in a lot of effort to get the soil up to the required nutrient levels before planting.

The ideal soil for growing vegetables is a rich, loamy soil; fertile, easily crumbled, high in organic matter, well drained and deep. Often you have to work with what is available in your garden. Properly prepared soil regardless of a sandy or heavy clay texture can still be used.

If the soil you have to work with is light sandy soil or heavy clay, adding plenty of organic matter is probably the fastest way to make the soil loamier in texture. Additives to the soil like peat moss, decomposed leaves, compost or old horse manure help considerably. If you plan to add something, make it a two to three inch high layer. Make the addition in spring before you start to prepare the soil. Repeat the process again in the fall.

The pH or acidity balance of the soil is important. Ideal pH values for most vegetables lie between six to six point five, which is slightly acidic. Seven is considered neutral; any value below seven is acid, and above is alkaline. You will need to have a soil test done to learn how much lime and fertilizer your soil will require to raise pH values to the required level. If you need to add lime, make sure it is done several months before planting. An application of lime in the fall will probably correct soil acidity in time for spring planting.

Fertilizers

Fertilizers are best applied just before or at planting time. Two methods of fertilization are broadcasting and row application. Broadcast fertilization is done by spreading the fertilizer on top of the soil. Generally, a combination of both methods works well. The fertilizer needs to be tilled into the soil for a depth of approximately four inches.

Use the broadcast method to apply fertilizer to entire garden area. The rest needs to be applied to each row in three inch wide furrows on each side of the row.

#6. Brussels Sprouts Grower's Guide

Brussels sprouts belong to the cabbage family and have the same growing requirements. If you would like to grow Brussels sprouts - and they are a good source of dietary fiber, vitamins and minerals - you need to be prepared to have patience. The plants require a long growing period and need time to mature. This needs to be factored into your gardening planning. A tip worth remembering; harvesting the vegetable after you've had frost enhances the flavor considerably.

The following guidelines will help you get started growing your own Brussels sprouts.

Early spring is the time to get the preparations started. Select and rake the bed to level the area. The frost generally helps in breaking down the clods. Cover the bed with mature compost. The soil should be dry rather than sticky wet. Press the compost into the soil - the back of

a rake should do. Then rake the bed over lightly.

Mark the rows that you will plant in. You can get straight rows by using the simple method of string tied to two stakes. Drill the rows with your trowel to half foot in depth. Space rows out with approximately six inches between two rows.

Sow your seeds thinly into the furrows and cover with the soil. You can firm the soil down, but lightly, with the rake head. Using a fine spray, keep the seed bed moist.

When the seedlings start to sprout, you will need to thin out, because overcrowding will give you weak plants. Do this when the plants are about an inch in height and set them about three inches apart.

At 4 to 6 inches height, the seedlings will be ready to plant out. Make sure to water the bed the previous day so you can remove them without doing any damage to the plants.

Brussels sprouts will thrive in cool climate, it helps them grow better. The plants can tolerate some frost, but don't fare well in very cold or hot temperatures.

Brussels sprouts need rich, fertile soil - dig deep in rich humus to give the plants the nourishment they need. Make sure the plants get full sun and the soil has good drainage. Soggy soil and sprouts do not go together well. Soil with a pH value of 6.0 to 7.5 is ideal for the plants.

Harvesting runs from late summer to spring. Sprouts need to be picked when they are large enough to use. Begin picking

from the bottom up and remove lower leaves to facilitate growth of the buds on the top.

#7. Budget Conscious Vegetable Growing Ideas

To have a garden is in itself a great thing and growing your own vegetables can be a great experience. Have you always wanted to have your own vegetable garden, but are afraid of the expense? The following ideas will help you grow your vegetables the budget conscious way.

Buy seed packets rather than the plants themselves. This will save you money because quite often seed packets are a mere fraction of the cost of the seedlings. You can try shopping online where you can get some great discounts and offers. It really is great fun to watch the seeds popping up out of the soil rather than starting out with a little plant.

You can get the seeds out of the vegetables you are eating to save on buying seed packets. Collect the seeds; dry them and then plant them all at absolutely no cost.

When shopping for plants always go for the smaller ones as they cost less. Shop around, you may find some small plants being sold as a group at a discount price. Before you part with your money, always make sure you have checked out the discount stores and nurseries. There are also some catalogs from which you can get reasonably priced plants.

If you have friends who are gardeners, you can always start

swapping seeds. If you don't have any gardening friends, it is always possible to make some new ones by signing up for the local gardening club. It's a great way to meet people and learn growing techniques that will help your vegetable garden along. People also have great money saving ideas for vegetable gardens that they don't mind sharing.

You can reduce the costs of gardening by splitting the vegetables into in-ground and container gardening. Some of the smaller vegetables like beans and peas will do well in containers. When you use containers you need less soil, compost, fertilizer and water.

Take stock of the vegetables you actually grow; by weeding out some of the more exotic ones you can really cut cost. It is best to grow the absolute essentials and pick up the more exotic ones from a grocery store during those rare occasions when you feel like eating them.

Make your own compost instead of buying compost, this will save you money. You can make your own compost pile in any old drum or wooden box you have.

You can even try selling some of your produce at the local weekly market.

There are lots of ways to grow your vegetables in a budget conscious way and still have the pleasure of gardening.

#8. Companion Planting

Companion planting, gardeners have found is a dual weapon in gardening. It helps to get rid of the pests that destroy the crop, while keeping those insects that are beneficial to the plants. Anyone interested in growing their own vegetables will need to be aware of this method. Keep reading to find out more.

Companion planting is not restricted to only vegetables; there are numerous varieties of herbs and flowers that can be used as well. The secret here is to keep an open mind and experiment. For example, you could use certain plants as a border for your vegetable beds. Using native plants means you get to attract the insects you want to. Plants with open cup flowers are popular with your friendly insects.

Here are a few ideas to help you get started.

Basil: planted with tomatoes enhances flavor and improves growth of the tomato plants. You can plant basil with asparagus and peppers as well. It is very useful in repelling thrips, flies and mosquitoes. Avoid planting basil near sage or rue.

Beans: enriches the soil with nitrogen and improves the conditions for planting any vegetable you want in the same bed after harvesting the beans. This plant is a good companion plant for carrots, beets, cucumbers, eggplant, corn, chards, celery, potatoes, cabbages, broccoli, radish and strawberries. Couple of things to note - don't allow your beans to mature on the plant or it will stop producing. Beans should not be picked when wet as it can spread viral diseases.

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