

Growing Vegetables Successfully

You can grow vegetables anywhere there is at least 5 hours of sun. Despite some random claims on the internet, planting in shade doesn't work very well. There's a reason that farmers don't plant in the woods! Beyond that, consider containers, raised beds, fabric pots, and non-traditional locations.

1. Smart Pots: <http://www.smartpots.com/> Plantings in Quebec City done by: <http://urbainculteurs.org/en/>
2. Don't plant in pure compost.
3. To till or not to till? Reasons to till: plants get established faster in loose soil, you can quickly get rid of weeds and remains of organic mulch from last year, you can easily work organic matter into the top 10" of soil, soil warms up more quickly. Reasons not to till: you disturb soil structure/soil biology, you expose new weed seeds to the light, looser soil dries out more quickly, looser soil can blow away (more an issue on farms), a permanent mulch layer (a la Ruth Stout) is less work and allows for in-garden composting.
4. Mulch keeps weeds down, water in, and can add organics to soil.
5. Crop rotation is most practical on farms, not small home gardens. Do what you can but don't stress about it.
6. Paper lunch bags can be used for protecting fruits and vegetables.
7. Wireless deer fence: <http://wirelessdeerfence.com/>
8. Motion activated sprinklers from <http://www.contech-inc.com> and <http://www.havahart.com>
9. Rabbits can climb fences! Leave tops floppy so they are dumped back onto the ground.
10. My go-to products in the vegetable garden: Diatomaceous Earth, Bt (aka Thuricide) and Spinosad for insects. Products above for animals plus netting and floating row cover. Fungicides: Green Cure, Actinovate, Serenade and (only if desperate) copper products.

Important note: copper is toxic to aquatic life. Don't use it by waterways. Don't overuse copper...it builds up in the soil over time.

11. Varieties I have found that do especially well;
Tomatoes: Mountain Magic, Sungold, Virginia Sweets, Oh Happy Day, Burpee's Big Boy, Japanese Black Trifele, Moskovich.
Squash: Zephyr (bicolor) Cosata Romanesco (huge plants, fewer squash) both mildew resistant and bear until hard frost.
Cucumber most disease resistant: County Fair
Kale: Tuscano (I harvested this until after New Year's!)
12. Blossom end rot is due to stress on tomato plants, especially early in the summer. It seldom has to do with calcium in soil.
13. Plant squash in groups in a depression, not on mounds.
14. There's no reason to give peppers "the hot foot."
15. Every year one crop is likely to sulk and another will grow gangbusters. You can't control it but it's worth it.
16. Too much zucchini? Make Concha, a Roman Jewish dish:
<http://wholelifegardening.com/blog/2013/08/11/what-to-do-with-too-many-zucchini-1/>

Barbequed Chard Rolls:

Wash large chard leaves and dry them. One by one place them flat on the counter and place a line of the cheese of your choice down the rib, leaving the bottom inch and top two inches cheese free. I especially like goat cheese but you can use any you enjoy. Fold the leaf in half over the cheese and roll it up, turning in the top part of the leaf if possible. Hold the roll in place with at least 3 toothpicks. Brush the rolls with olive oil and place on the grill. Turn once after about three minutes. Cook for a couple more minutes until soft and slightly charred. Pull out the toothpicks before eating.

C.L. Fornari

www.GardenLady.com

podcast: www.Plantrama.com