

Vegetable Garden Tips for a Successful Harvest

1. Plan to site your garden in an area that receives at least six hours of sunlight each day.
2. If planning a new garden, have your soil tested for nutrient levels before planting and then amend as needed.
3. Grow what your family likes to eat and add something new each year.
4. Water your vegetable garden deeply in early morning and aim your water at soil level so it reaches the roots. Shallow watering creates shallow roots more susceptible to drying out.
5. Be sure your garden goes into the night dry. This helps to prevent fungal diseases such as powdery mildew.
6. Do not use pesticides in the garden as they will kill beneficial insects as well as pests.
7. In hot weather, mulch your vegetable garden with straw or shredded leaves to maintain soil moisture.
8. In fall and winter mulch your beds to avoid soil loss, create habitat for overwintering insects and to protect plant roots.
9. Take daily walks to inspect your plants for insect problems. Pests caught early are easily controlled.
10. Keep weeds pulled. Small weeds are easier to pull than ones left to grow too large.
11. Plant flowers and herbs in the vegetable garden to attract beneficial insects and increase pollination.
12. Harvest in a timely manner and store your vegetables in a cool area until they can be used.
13. Grow tomatoes under cover to prevent blight problems. Place under the eaves if growing in containers or erect a clear plastic roof over your tomato plants. This means you will be watering, not the rain.
14. Space your plants properly as indicated on the seed package or plant tag. Plants need good air circulation to prevent fungal diseases.
15. Plant successively so you don't have all your plants ready at the same time. No one can use twenty heads of lettuce at once. Space your plantings two weeks apart and plant throughout the growing season.
16. Get to know the difference between cool and warm season crops.
17. Encourage birds to the garden as many eat insects and are free pest control.
18. Plant diversity is the key to a healthy garden so be sure to plant trees, shrubs and flowers as well as a vegetable garden.
19. Treat mildew on squash plants by making sure your plants are fertilized and watered to encourage new growth.
20. Cut vegetable plants down in the fall by snipping them at the base. The root system will break down over the winter.
21. Use scissors to thin your carrots by cutting the greens off at soil level. This prevents disturbing the roots of the carrots nearby.
22. Use floating row covers in the garden to prevent flying insect pests from laying eggs on your plants. Be sure to leave the covers loose to allow for plant growth.
23. Use potato traps to monitor wireworm populations in the soil. Place a cut piece of potato on a skewer and insert into the soil leaving enough skewer showing to pull out. Leave for one week and remove to see if you have trapped wireworms. If you have, redo the potato traps to collect more of this pest and destroy them.
24. Practice good crop rotation. The three most important crop families to rotate are:
Solanaceae (tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, tomatillo and potatoes), Allium (garlic, onions, leeks, shallots and chives), Brassicaceae (kale, brussel sprouts, turnip, cabbage, broccoli, radish, kohlrabi, cauliflower and pac choi)
25. Trellis plants such as beans and peas. Grow vertically to save space.
26. Acclimatize vegetable seedlings for one week before transplanting to the garden.

Vegetable Garden Tips for a Successful Harvest

Below are average planting times for zone 8. Please adjust to suit your climate.

January-Start artichoke seeds indoors at end of the month.

February-Start asparagus seeds indoors, plant broad beans, mustard and claytonia outside, plant pac choi, radishes and spinach under cover outside. Start peas outside mid month.

March-Outside plant arugula, broad beans, corn salad, cress, kale & collards, pac choi, mustard, peas, radishes and spinach. Plant parsnips mid month. Sow asparagus, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, fennel, leeks, lettuce, tomatoes and broccoli indoors.

April-Outside plant arugula, broad beans, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cress, endive, fennel, kale and collards, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, mustard, storage onions, scallions, pac choi, parsnips, peas, radishes, spinach and turnips. Transplant cauliflower seedlings in mid April. Sow celery and eggplant indoors.

May-Outside plant amaranth, arugula, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cress, endive, fennel, kale, collards, kohlrabi to mid month, leeks, lettuce, mustard, scallions, pac choi, parsley, parsnips, peas, purslane, quinoa, spinach, swiss chard and turnips. Bush and pole beans can be sown outside in mid May. Tomato and artichoke transplants can be set out. Cover tomatoes. Start brussel sprouts inside for setting out in August. Start cucumbers indoors.

June-Outside plant amaranth to mid June, arugula, asparagus transplants, bush and pole beans, beets, broccoli, overwintering

broccoli, cabbage, carrots, celery, corn, cress, cucumbers by mid June, fennel, kale, collards, leeks, lettuce, melon transplants, okra, scallions, parsnips, purslane, rutabaga to mid June, spinach, swiss chard and turnips. Set out eggplant & pepper seedlings and cover.

July-Outside plant arugula, beans, beets, parsnips and carrots until mid month, broccoli, overwintering broccoli, overwintering cabbage, cress, endive, fennel, kale, collards, lettuce, scallions, pac choi, peas, purslane, rhubarb, rutabaga, spinach, swiss chard and turnips.

August-Outside plant arugula, broccoli and brussel sprout transplants, cress, lettuce, scallions, pac choi, parsley, peas, purslane, spinach, swiss chard and turnips. Start overwintering cauliflower seeds indoors.

September-Outside plant arugula, cauliflower transplants, claytonia, cress, endive, lettuce and pac choi under cover, mustard, scallions, parsley transplants and radishes. Start spinach indoors.

October-Outside plant broad beans, corn salad, garlic and mustard, Plant endive and radishes under cover. Mid month set out spinach transplants and cover.

November-Outside plant broad beans, spinach under cover.

December-Crops that are under cover will not grow if it gets too cold. Keep covers on during extreme cold. Pick salad greens when plants are not frozen and enjoy.

Kristin Crouch

<https://www.thatbloomingarden.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/thatbloomingarden/>

<https://twitter.com/deltagardener>