



Basic Vegetable Gardening



Growing your own vegetables provides you with a great deal of joy, satisfaction, and the freshest produce! Follow these easy guidelines and you're on your way to a great garden and tasty veggies!

Getting Started

Choose Site: Choose a site that gets six hours of direct sunlight and is not on a steep slope that will erode. Make sure that your site has adequate air circulation and good drainage, and plant your garden away from other trees and shrubs so that their roots will not compete for the same water supply.

Plan Garden: Decide what you would like to grow and then select the varieties that are hardy in this area. Next draw out on paper how you would like to arrange your garden. Lay out your plan so that the taller vegetables do not block out the sun of the smaller ones.

Seeds vs. Starter Plants: Some vegetables grow best from seed and of course you'll have more plants to harvest. Other vegetables, such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and vine crops are usually planted as transplants because of the yield per plant and the desirability of planting several different varieties.

Prepare Soil: Vegetables grow best in fertile, well drained soil. An ideal garden soil will contain at least 20% organic matter to improve aeration and drainage, as well as to hold nutrients until plants can use them. To test your soil for nutritional value use a soil test kit or have Johnson's test it for you, for a \$10.00 fee.

A good way to improve your soil is with Johnson's Soil Recipe:

- Three 2-cu. ft. bags **Cotton Ball Compost**
- 4 lbs. **Hi-Yield Bone Meal**
- 4 lbs. **ferti•lome Gardener's Special**
- 40 lbs. **Gypsum**
- 1 lb. **Weed and Grass Stopper** (do not use if direct seeding unless variety is listed on label)

Use MYKE™ Vegetable Garden, a beneficial soil inoculant, along with Johnson's Soil Recipe. MYKE™ contains a natural fungus that enhances root and plant development when it comes in contact with plant roots.

Planting: Rake the prepared soil to make it level. To plant seeds, make a slight furrow with a hoe or the edge of your trowel and sow the seeds into the furrow, following the instructions on the seed packet regarding plant depth and spacing. When planting a starter plant be sure to carefully remove the plant from it's cell and place it in the soil. Plant only after all danger of heavy frost has passed.

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Maintaining the Garden

Watering: Vegetables need a constant water supply. The best time to water is in the morning so that the plant's leaves dry off quickly. The most efficient watering system is drip irrigation. It puts the water directly at the root zone where it is needed and keeps the leaves dry so there are fewer disease problems. You can also use water timers to take care of watering automatically.

Fertilizing: Once seedlings are up, use a water soluble plant food like **ferti•lome Blooming & Rooting** or **Daniels**. When plants are more established use **ferti•lome Gardener's Special** once a month. (This application can be supplemented weekly with ferti•lome Blooming & Rooting.)

Thinning: When planting seeds, extra seeds should be sown since not all will come up. After the seeds sprout, the weaker seedlings should be removed to give the others enough room to grow. Some crops, such as onions and beets, can be partially harvested early to give the remaining ones more room.

Insect & Disease Control: Vegetable plants can be bothered by diseases and insects. A good defense is to keep your plants healthy by keeping the leaves dry and by using **Dr. T's Multi-Purpose Insect Repellent**, an organic spray. Or, monitor your plants and when you notice a problem use **Monterey Take Down Garden Spray, Eight**, or **Concern Multi-Purpose Insect Killer** to control insects.

Weed Control: Weeds can be controlled by mulching between the rows with straw and cottonseed hulls. The mulch also minimizes splashing on the leaves, reducing disease. There are also granular pre-emergents like **Weed Stopper** and **Corn Gluten** that you can use to control weeds if you are transplanting. Do not use these if you are directly seeding.

Harvest: Days to harvest for individual vegetables are given on the seed packages. For higher yields and the best flavor, vegetables should be picked at their peak of maturity. Vegetables that are leaves or stems, such as cabbage and onions, can usually be harvested over a long period as they are needed. Vegetables that are the fruit of the plant, such as peas, beans, and tomatoes, should be picked every two or three days when they are first ripe. Overripe vegetables should be removed so growth goes into the developing vegetables.

Planting Methods

Traditional Row: If you sow seeds in traditional rows, the garden will be easier to work and you will be better able to distinguish between vegetable and weed seedlings. To set up a traditional row, use string and stakes to keep the rows straight.

Wide-Row: Wide-row planting is just what its name indicates, planting your vegetables in a 1-3 ft. wide band instead of a single row. Prepare the seed bed just as you would a traditional row, by using string and stakes. Broadcast the seeds along the band, then lightly rake to cover them over.

Raised Bed: In raised-bed planting, the planting surface is raised 1-2 feet. The bed should be narrow enough so the center can be reached from the side. This type of bed provides better drainage because no one walking on the dirt, packing it down. A raised bed also reduces bending and stretching.

Square-Foot: This type of garden is partitioned off in 1 ft. x 1 ft. blocks. A common arrangement is to block off sections that are 4 ft. x 4 ft. Within each section a different vegetable is grown. The yield is usually much higher than a traditional single row planting method and takes up less space.