

Tips for planting a home vegetable garden



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Education Resource**

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Spring is the time to begin planting the home vegetable garden after the danger of frost has passed, which is around April 15 in our area. There are a multitude of vegetables that are easy to grow. With the proper care and maintenance, you can have an abundant harvest.

The garden should be planted in full sun. The area should only be large enough for you to adequately maintain. It should also be planted close enough to a water source so the application of water will be convenient. During dry spells, supplemental watering will be necessary to keep the plants in optimal condition.

The soil should be loose, moist and well drained. Organic soil amendments, such as peat moss, composted manure, top soil, and compost, should be added to help increase the aeration and drainage of the soil. The ideal pH for most vegetables is 6.0 to 6.5. Consider having your soil tested through Extension for pH and soil nutrient levels to get the proper fertilization and liming recommendations. If you have not had your soil tested, apply a complete fertilizer with a formulation such as 8-8-8 or 10-10-10 at the rate of 20 to 30 pounds per thousand square feet and then mix it into the soil.

Once the ground is prepared and fertilized, you can begin planting. Vegetables can be planted in two ways: by transplants and by seeds. Transplants are small young plants that were seeded in containers indoors or in greenhouses, four to eight weeks earlier. Tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and cabbages are often planted as transplants. Plant them as deep as the top of the rootball and carefully firm the soil around them.

Other vegetables can be directly seeded such as beans, squash, peas, melons, and radishes. Refer to the directions on the seed pack on how deep to plant, then cover with the necessary amount of soil and firm the soil around the seed by pressing the soil down lightly with a garden tool. Water the seeds in thoroughly after planting.

Vegetable gardening can be enjoyable while supplying a bountiful supply of fresh healthy vegetables. Careful planning, knowledge of site conditions and plant preferences will help ensure the success of the garden.

