



April - June 2011

GARDENING

Growing a Garden

Planting a garden, even a small one, allows for a greater degree of self-reliance. With the right information and a little practice, individuals and entire families can enjoy the many benefits of planting and tending a garden.

Planning a Garden

As you begin to plan and prepare for a garden, here are a few general reminders:

- Vegetables need at least six hours of sunlight a day.
- The garden site should be relatively level. If there is a steep slope, run rows of plants across it to prevent erosion.
- It is a good idea to spade (mix) the soil to a depth of 12 to 14 inches. Adding organic matter such as manure, peat moss or leaves will benefit the soil.
- Be careful with fertilizer. All fertilizers have a three-digit code. For vegetable gardens, look for 8-8-8 or 16-16-16.

- The simplest way to eliminate plant pests is to remove insects, worms, or eggs by hand. Some shake-on powder or liquid bug sprays are relatively safe to use.

Proper depth for planting seeds is approximately four times as deep as the seed is thick.

Gardening in Containers

If you don't have a traditional garden plot, you can plant vegetables and herbs in containers that fit on driveways, balconies, roofs, and even window sills. This activity can be interesting and rewarding for adults and children alike.

You can plant in almost any kind of container. Try using plastic jugs, garbage cans, milk cartons, cans, plastic bags, baskets, a wagon bed, kitchen canisters, or clay pots. The bottom of the container should have several small drain holes and be lined with 2 to 3 inches of small gravel before you put in the topsoil. Hang containers from windows, put them on windowsills or in window wells; line your sidewalk or driveway with them, or hang them from your ceiling.

The following chart shows you how much dirt you will need in a container to grow some common vegetables. This will give you an idea of what size container you need to use. It also tells you when to plant and

harvest the vegetables and how big they will get. These are not the only vegetables that grow well in containers. You can try almost any kind that is common to your area.

COMMON GARDEN CROPS					
Crop	Container Needs	Growing Season	Planting Time	Harvest Days	Mature Size of Plant
Beets	10–12 inches (25–30 centimeters) of soil	Early spring, fall	2–4 weeks before last frost	50–60	10–12 inches (25–30 centimeters)
Bush Beans	8–10 inches (20–25 centimeters) of soil	Warm weather	Early spring	Snap 50–55 Lima 65	12–14 inches (30–60 centimeters)
Carrots	10–12 inches (25–30 centimeters)	Early spring, fall	2–4 weeks before last frost	60–75	10–12 inches (25–30 centimeters)
Cucumbers	1 gallon (4 liters) per plant	Warm weather	3–4 weeks before last frost	55–75	Shape vines by cutting back
Eggplant	3 gallons (11 liters) 12–14 inches (30–35 centimeters) diameter of soil	Warm weather	Plant indoors, transplant after 8 weeks	120–140	2–3 feet (.5–1 meter)
Green pepper	1 gallon (3.8 liters) per plant	Warm weather	Plant indoors, transplant after 7–8 weeks	110–120	2–3 feet (.5–1 meter)
Lettuce	1 gallon (3.8 liters) per plant	Cool weather, can stand slight frost	4–6 weeks before last frost	40–50	6–10 inches (15–25 centimeters)
Green onions	8–10 inches (20–25 centimeters) of soil	Cool weather, can stand slight frost	4–6 weeks before last frost	35–45	10–12 inches (25–30 centimeters)
Radishes	6 inches (15 centimeters) of soil	Cool weather, can stand slight frost	2–4 weeks before last frost	20–40	6–8 inches (15–20 centimeters)
Spinach	8–10 inches (20–25 centimeters) per plant	Cool weather, spring, fall	2–4 weeks before last frost	50–70	Plants spread out, do not grow tall
Squash	5 gallons (19 liters) for a 3–4 plant hill	Warm weather, will produce through fall	3–4 weeks before last frost	Summer 50–60 Winter 85–110	Bush 2–3 feet (.5m–1 meter) Vine-pinch off to control runners
Tomatoes	Dwarf: 1 gallon (3.8 liters) Standard: 2–3 gallons (7.5–11 liters) Mini: 8–10 inches (20–25 centimeters)	Warm weather	Plant indoors, transplant after 3–4 weeks. Easily harmed by frost.	50–90	Dwarf: 2–3 feet (.5–1 meter) Standard: 3–5 feet (1–1.5 meters) Standard vines need support frame