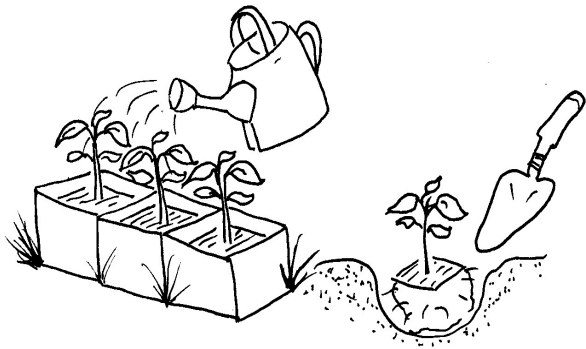


PLANTING A VEGETABLE GARDEN



When to plant?

Cool weather crops, such as broccoli, cabbage, lettuce and Brussels sprouts, can tolerate a little frost so they can be transplanted two weeks or so prior to the average date of the last frost.

Plant warm weather crops, such as tomato, pepper, eggplant and melon when all danger of frost is past - daytime temperatures and the soil temperature warm to 60° - 65°F.

→ See *Growing Tips 18* Plan a Vegetable Garden.

Hardening Off

If you've grown your own seedlings, gradually expose them to periods of time outdoors. At the same time, reduce watering, but don't let the plants wilt. This process helps the plants adjust to outdoor conditions - "hardening off". If you purchase transplants at a garden center, ask if they need hardening off.

Prepare to plant.

Straight rows make the vegetable garden easier to weed and cultivate!

- Spread all-purpose fertilizer on each side of the row and rake into the soil.
- Use the corner of a hoe or stick to make a straight, shallow furrow.
- Make the furrow at the right depth for the seeds you are planting.
- The space between rows and plants varies among vegetable crops. Read the back of the seed packet for guidance.

Planting Seeds

Rule of thumb: plant seeds at a depth 2 - 4 times the width of the seed. **Small seeded** crops such as lettuce or carrots should be planted no more than ¼" deep. **Larger seeds** such as beans, peas, squash or sweet corn should be about 1" - 2" deep. **Note:** press soil down gently, but firmly over seeds for good seed to soil contact! Water immediately.

Wide Rows and Hills

Scattering seeds across a wide row is another way to plant carrot, beet, radish, leaf lettuce, and onion. Make a shallow 24" wide bed, up to 24", by raking soil to the side (save to cover seed). Scatter seeds evenly and lightly over the surface. Cover the seeds with the soil you raked to the side.

Tamp the soil down the soil gently with the flat side of a hoe or rake so that the seeds and soil make good contact.

Hill planting is often used for vine crops such as squash, melons and cucumbers.

Plant 4 - 6 seeds within a 12" circle. Thin seedlings to 3 per hill. **Note:** hilling isn't a raised mound, which can allow soil to dry out too quickly.

Water all newly planted seeds thoroughly with a fine shower! Keep moist until seedlings appear. → See *Growing Tips 6* Watering.

How to Transplant Seedlings

- Water transplants an hour before transplanting.
- Plant anytime of day, although early morning or late in the day when it is not hot is best (for you and the plants!).
- Dig each planting hole a little wider than the roots of the new plant.
- Plant at the same depth that they were in the container. Tomatoes, however, can be planted up to first set of leaves.
- If using peat pots, or other ready-to-plant container, tear the top rim away. If the rim of the pot sticks up above the soil surface, it will draw moisture from the roots.
- Water each new transplant with a quart of water. Water with a quart of water each sunny day for the first week; then, water each plant twice per week.



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