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| **Growing a Vegetable Garden** |  |

**Pick the Right Location Getting Started**

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| * Plant in a sunny location   + At least 6 hours of direct sunlight per day   + Some leafy vegetable will tolerate some shade * Plant in moist, well-drained soil   + Avoid locations where there is puddling * Choose a garden size you can handle * Plan how to arrange your garden   + Ensure enough space between seedlings for full grown vegetables |  | * Plant after all danger of frost is gone   + After May 15 * If planting from seed read the seed packets   + Seed depth   + Germination days   + Weeks indoors   + Maturation days * Choose a location that the hose or sprinkler can reach * Choose vegetables you will actually eat |

**Prepare Your Soil Efficient Use of Space – Raised Gardens**

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| * If planting in the ground   + Add compost to the soil each year   + Make sure the plants have enough nutrients to grow * If planting in raised gardens   + Use a mixture of compost and organic matter for fertility and good soil structure   + Compost, shredded leaves, aged animal manures, cover crops |  | * Good for growing small plots of vegetables * 2-4 ft. wide; usually 6”-8” above grade * Prevent soil compaction & erosion * Better drainage in areas with clay soils * Don’t have to plant in rows; can increase yield per sq. ft. * Disadvantage   + Dries out quickly in hot dry weather |

**Easy Vegetables to Grow** **Seeds** **Seedlings**

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| Tomatoes Lettuce  Zucchini squash Beets  Peppers Carrots  Cabbage Spinach or Kale  Green beans Radishes | * Plant seeds at the recommended Depth and spacing on packet * Tamp down lightly on the soil for good seed to soil contact * Keep moist with daily water until established | * Fertilize after planting and keep moist with daily watering until established |

**Growing Vertically Types of Vertical Supports**

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| Put vertical supports in garden during initial planting - avoid damaging plant roots   * Crops for Growing Vertically   + Beans   + Cucumbers   + Melons (not watermelon)   + Peas   + Summer squash   + Tomatoes   + Winter squash |  | * Reduce the amount of ground space needed to grow certain vegetables * Improve the appearance – fruits will grow longer and straighter with the pull of gravity   + Trellis, netting, or fence   + Wire or wooden cages   + Teepees and tripods.   + A-frame   + Poles and posts |

**Interplanting Interplanting with Flowers and Herbs**

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| A multiple cropping practice involving growing two or more crops in proximity  **To make the most of your garden space**   * Grow fast-growing vegetables between slower-growing vegetables * Grow deep rooted vegetables next to shallow rooted vegetables * Alternate spring, summer, and autumn crops so you can successively harvest different veggies |  | Adding flowers and herbs to a vegetable garden makes it more difficult for pests to find your veggies   * Marigolds – a favorite companion in Veggie Gardens * Nasturtiums –are eaten by the pest rather than the vegetables   + an edible flower great in salads * Herbs – can enhance the flavor of vegetables and attract beneficial insects |

**Succession Planting – A Continuous Harvest Gardening Tips**

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| Succession Planting is repeatedly seeding small amounts throughout the season or planting varieties that mature at different times.   * Plant a few seeds or transplants at time throughout the growing season * Early spring - cold hardy greens and peas * Early summer – heat loving plants, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant * Midsummer through mid-fall – frost hearty crops   Keep cleaning out beds as you harvest crops to make room for new vegetable that will take their place |  | * Pesticides sprayed on plants will make its way into the soil   + Can kill beneficial insects and microorganisms living there * Synthetic fertilizers contain salt   + Can kill the soil residents   + Can build up in soil and possibly harm plants * Fertilizers can burn plant leaves and roots, and reduce fruiting * Water the roots, not the leaves * Use drip irrigation when possible to save water |

**Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC)**

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| University of Maryland Extension provides science-based gardening information through their **Home and Garden Information Center:** <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/environment-natural-resources/program-areas/home-and-garden-information-center>  Questions are answered through email via the “**Ask Extension**” tab: <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/environment-natural-resources/program-areas/home-and-garden-information-center/ask-extension>  The HGIC webpage titled **Food Gardening** contains guidance for growing a vegetable garden and a chart for planting times.  <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/environment-natural-resources/program-areas/home-and-garden-information-center/food-gardening>  Planting calendar:  [https://extension.umd.edu/resource/when-plant-vegetables-Maryland](https://extension.umd.edu/resource/when-plant-vegetables-maryland) |

**Fertilization Fertilization**

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| The HGIC has an article on Soil Testing and Soil Testing Labs  <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/soil-testing-and-soil-testing-labs>   * Don’t fertilize if rain is forecast in the next 24 hours * Vegetable crops generally need nutrients most when   + getting established   + during flowering and fruiting * Follow label directions of selected fertilizer |  | * Organic plant foods are slow releasing * Feeds your plants all season long * Water-soluble fertilizer * Need to have garden well-watered before applying * Good for new seedlings and transplants * Suggestions * Apply fertilizer sparingly when initially planting seedlings – tender roots * Fertilize as required during the rest of the growth cycle * Mix dry fertilizers into the top 2-4 inches of soil - then water |

**Disease & Pest Management Organic Mulches**

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| **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**  A process you can use to solve pest problems while minimizing risks to people and the environment   * Attracting natural enemies * planting disease-resistant varieties * Using approaches to prevent problems and control pests and diseases at acceptable levels |  | * Prevent weed growth * Moderate soil temperatures * Conserve soil moisture * Add to soil organic matter * Should be spread after soil warms up * Can provide habitat for pests along with beneficial critters |

**Harvest Your Garden Maintain Soil in Winter**

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| * When garden begins to produce harvest promptly   + Prevents vegetables from rotting * Crops left on the ground attract pests * Throw vegetable waste in a compost pile   + Do not leave it on the ground * At end of season –Clean up garden   + Don’t leave debris that insects can use for nesting   + Cover with compost, mulch, or a cover crop |  | * Green ‘manure’ cover crops   + improve soil structure   + Provide food for beneficial microbes * Results in healthier soil for next growing season * Grasses such as alfalfa, oats, rye – deep roots that break up and loosen compacted soil * Legumes such as clover, vetch –grab nitrogen from the air and release it into the soil through their roots |

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