

CHATS IN THE GARDEN

Little River Basin Master Gardeners
Association

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Vegetable Gardening



What do I want from my garden?

- Do you want to grow your own food?
- Do you want to harvest enough produce to provide for family and friends?
- Do you plan to maintain garden all spring and summer, or harvest what you can and lay garden by for next season?



Site Selection

Where will my garden be located?

 Light

 ≥ 6 hours

 Soil

 Access



The location of your garden will determine what you can grow successfully. Well drained soil. Access to water. Is your soil clay or sand? Is the garden shady or sunny? Limited space or plenty space? *(Most seed catalogs and seed packets provide planting and growing information).*



Soil

 Well-drained.

Solutions for clay soils:

-  Add organic matter
-  Or use Raised beds



Access

- Near the house.
 - Easy to get to when harvesting.
 - Accessible for weeding, cultivating, & staking plants.
- Close to water source.



How do I determine what to plant in my garden?

- Consider what you like to eat.
 - Knowing your own taste will help narrow your choices and save hours wondering what seeds to purchase. *(Seed catalogs are good source of information for what you might like to plant and harvest).*



What Vegetables Will Grow In My Climate?

- It's important to choose plants appropriate for your USDA climate zone. We are in South Central to Southeast regions.
 - ▣ *Plant cool weather crops as early as you can get them in the ground, but don't be tempted to do that with warm weather crops. They won't show much growth until it's warmer, and you're risking frost damage. Especially tomatoes. They don't do well below 45 degrees.*



Early Season Crops

Early Beets
Early Cabbage
Lettuce
Onion Sets
Peas
Radishes
Early Spinach
Mustard
Turnips

After Last Frost
Sweet Corn

Long Season Crops

Cabbage
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Muskmelons
Peppers
Squash
Tomatoes
Watermelon

Late Season Crops

Bush Beans
Beets
Broccoli
Chinese Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Endive
Kale
Kohlrabi
Lettuce
Radishes
Spinach
Turnips







Physical Requirements:

Temperature




When to Plant?

Cool season crops

-  Develop best <math>< 50^{\circ}</math> F
-  Tolerate frost.
-  Quality deteriorates under warm conditions.
-  Peas, spinach, cole crops



Warm season crops

-  Develop best at temps >math>50^{\circ}</math> F.
-  Killed by frost.
-  Beans, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, sweet corn



MAINTAINING YOUR GARDEN

GARDEN RULE:

In order to be a successful gardener, you should cast our shadow over your garden every day

 Weeding

 Watering

 Mulching

 Pest Control



Weed Control

- Weeds Compete with plants for sunlight, water, nutrients, & space.
- Reduce perennial weeds before planting.
 - Solarization with black plastic.
- Hoe regularly to keep annual weeds under control.
- Carrots, onions, radishes, & beets need more vigilant weed management because of their small canopy.







Watering

- Match water application to plant needs.
- Based on
 - Soil type
 - Rainfall
 - Crop requirements
 - Growth stage
- Experience and soil examination are best measures.
- Rain gauge



Mulching





Organic – breaks down

-  Straw
-  Chopped leaves
-  Wood chips
-  Grass clippings

Inorganic

-  Plastic

Benefits

-  Weed suppression
-  Temperature moderation
-  Soil moisture moderation
-  Add nutrients



Pest Control



- 🌀 Cultural control is your 1st line of defense
- 🌀 Chemical control should be used only as a **last resort.**



My Personal Gardening Success

 Purple Hull Peas

 Watermelon

 Okra

 Tomatoes



GARDENING “To-Do List”

During dry periods, vegetable gardens need extra **watering**. Most vegetables benefit from an inch or more water each week, especially when they are fruiting.

Mulching between the rows will help to control weeds, conserve moisture in the soil, and provide you with pathways to access your plants. Black plastic may be used, or you can utilize grass clippings, straw, wood chips, or garden debris.

Throughout the growing season be vigilante against **insect pests**. Discovering a bug problem early will make it much easier to take appropriate action and eliminate the pests. Do not use pesticides once the plants have fruited unless it becomes an absolute necessity, and be sure to follow the manufacturers recommendations.

Weeds rob your vegetables of water, light and root space. Keep them pulled out regularly (*try to get the entire root*) and the job isn't too bad. If they are allowed to go to seed, **you may be dealing with thousands of weeds** instead of a few.

Once you have harvested your crop, put the spent plant and other vegetable matter into your **compost** pile so that it can be recycled into your garden again, next spring.



References:

- Wilhite Seed Catalog
- “How to Grow Vegetables and Fruits by the Organic Method”, Author J. I. Rodale, Copyright 1961
- Neil Sperry's Complete Guide To “Texas Gardening” Second Edition, Copyright 1991



Q & A

HAPPY GARDENING

