

Planning a Vegetable Garden

*Peter J. Nitzsche, Morris County Agricultural Agent &
Stephen Reiners, Ph.D., Former Extension Specialist in Vegetable Crops*



The most important factor in planning a vegetable garden is location. Choose a site with good drainage and no standing water, even after the heaviest rain. Keep the garden away from trees and shrubs, which may compete with vegetables for water, nutrients, and light. Leafy vegetables, such as lettuce and spinach, require the least direct sunlight, only 4 to 5 hours. Root vegetables require 5 to 6 hours, and fruiting vegetables, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, and zucchini, require at least 8 hours. Remember, NO vegetable can grow in total shade.

Once you've decided where the garden will go, it's time to choose which vegetables to grow. First, make a list of those vegetables you like. Next, put a plan down on paper. This will help you make the best use of space and will save time when planting by showing you exactly where to place your seeds and transplants. The plan should include the following information: garden size, space between rows and within rows, crops and varieties, planting dates, seeded crops, and transplanted crops. You may want to make two plans. One for the spring planting and one for a second planting for summer and autumn harvest.

Use the table included in this factsheet to help you plan. If possible, rotate your crops so similar vegetables are not planted in the same location consecutively. Remember to place your tallest growing crops on the north side of the garden so as not to shade lower growing plants. Also allow for good air movement through the garden. This ensures that moisture on plant leaves dries quickly and may lessen disease problems.

When choosing varieties, always look for ones with disease resistance. Although these varieties may cost more than some of the old standards, they more than make up for the cost with improved yields and less reliance on chemical controls. For more information call your county Rutgers Cooperative Extension office (listed in the phone book under county government) or visit our web site at www.rce.rutgers.edu.

A good garden design will save you time and make the best use of limited garden space. Most importantly, vegetables grown under optimal conditions, along with the use of disease-resistant varieties, will result in healthy, high-yielding crops.

Vegetable Planting Guide

Vegetable	Spacing (in.)		Transplant or Seeds	Planting Dates*	Avg. Yield per 10 ft. of Row	
	In Row	Btwn. Rows				
Asparagus	18	60	Crowns	Perennial	5	lbs
Beans, Lima, bush	4	24	seed	Ma,Ju,Jl	6	lbs
Beans, Lima, pole	36	36	seed	Ma,Ju,Jl	7	lbs
Beans, Snap, bush	4	24	seed	Ma,Ju,Jl	6	lbs
Beans, snap. pole	36	24	seed	Ma,Ju,Jl	7	lbs
Beets	3	15	seed	Ap,Ma,Ju,Jl	14	lbs
Broccoli	15	30	transplant	Ap,Ma,Jl,Au	8	heads
Brussels Sprouts	18	30	transplant	Jl	5	lbs
Cabbage	18	24	transplant	Ap,Jl	7	heads
Cabbage, Chinese	12	18	seed or trp.	Ap,Jl	10	heads
Carrots	3	15	seed	Ap,Ma,Ju,Jl	10	lbs
Cauliflower	24	30	transplant	Jl	5	heads
Celery	6	18	transplant	Ma,Ju	20	stalks
Chard, Swiss	6	24	seed	Ap,Ma,Ju,Jl,Au	20	plants
Collards	18	24	seed	Ap,Ma,Ju,Jl	10	lbs
Corn, Sweet	12	24	seed	Ma,Ju	10	ears
Cucumbers	36	30	seed or trp.	Ju,Jl	8	lbs
Eggplant	30	30	transplant	Ma,Ju	20	fruit
Endive	12	18	seed or trp.	Ap,Ma,Ju,Jl,Au	10	plants
Kale	15	18	seed	Jl,Ag	24	lbs
Kohlrabi	4	15	seed or trp.	Ap,Ma,Jl,Au	20	bulbs
Leeks	3	15	transplants	Ap,Ma,Au	40	plants
Lettuce,Leaf,Romaine	8	15	seed or trp.	Ap,Ma,Au,Se	15	heads
Lettuce, Bibb	6	15	seed or trp.	Ap,Ma,Au,Se	20	heads
Muskmelons	36	72	seed or trp.	Ju	8	melons
Mustard Greens	12	15	seed	Au	10	lbs
Okra	24	36	seed	Ma,Ju	100	pods
Onions, dry	4	15	seed,trp.sets	Ap	10	lbs
Parsley	6	15	seed	Ap,Ma,Ju	20	bunches
Parsnips	3	18	seed	Ap	10	lbs
Peas	2	18	seed	Mr,Ap	3	lbs
Peppers	15	15	transplant	Ju	12	lbs
Pumpkins	48	96	seed	Ju	4	fruit
Radishes	1	12	seed	Ap,Ma,Ju,Jl,Au,Se	60	roots
Rhubarb	36	48	crowns	Perennial	20	stalks
Rutabagas	4	18	seeds	Ap,Jl	15	lbs
Spinach	4	18	seeds	Ap,Se	7	lbs
Squash, bush	24	48	seeds or trp.	Ju,Jl	25	fruit
Squash, vine	36	72	seeds or trp.	Ju	20	fruits
Sweet Potatoes	12	36	transplants	Ju	12	lbs
Tomatoes	24	36	transplants	Ma,Ju	50	lbs
Turnips	3	18	seed	Ap,Jl	7	lbs
Watermelons	36	96	seed	Ju	3	melons
White Potatoes	12	24	tubers	Ap	18	lbs

*Mr=March; Ap=April; Ma=May; Ju=June; Jl=July; Ag=August; Se=September

© 2004 by Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension, NJAES, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

Desktop publishing by Rutgers-Cook College Resource Center

Revised: July 2003

**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE RESEARCH & EXTENSION
N.J. AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
NEW BRUNSWICK**

Distributed in cooperation with U.S. Department of Agriculture in furtherance of the Acts of Congress on May 8 and June 30, 1914. Rutgers Cooperative Extension works in agriculture, family and community health sciences, and 4-H youth development. Dr. Karyn Malinowski, Director of Extension. Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension provides information and educational services to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension is an Equal Opportunity Program Provider and Employer.