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Rotating Your Vegetables in the Garden

by Craig Mauney, Extension Agent

Rotate your vegetables by not planting the same vegetable or related vegetable in the same location year after year. Rotate at least once every three years (or 3-4 seasons between families) especially in small garden areas. If you have space to do so, rotate your entire garden area to another part of the yard. By rotating vegetables from different families you can prevent buildup of insects and diseases that attack your plants. Because plant insects and diseases are not always obvious, they may not build up to a damaging level in a single season or year. Below is a list of vegetable families that are helpful to know when rotating your garden:

Brassicas (Mustard Family):

Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cauliflower, Cabbage, Collards, Kale, Mustard, Radish, Turnips, Rutabaga, Kohlrabi

Cucurbits (Squash Family):

Cucumbers, Squash, Zucchini, Winter Squash, Pumpkins, Cantaloupe, Watermelons

Solanaceous (Nightshade

Family): Tomatoes, Peppers, Eggplant, Potatoes

Legumes (Bean Family):

Garden peas, peanuts, green beans, lima beans, southern peas

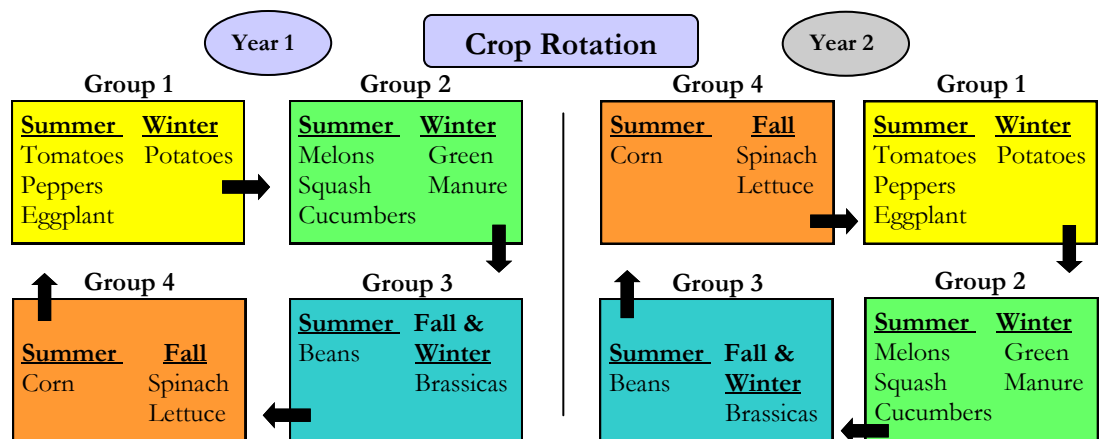
Alliums (Onion Family):

Onions, garlic, leeks, scallions

Vegetables with no close relatives:

Lettuce, endive
 Sweet Corn
 Sweet Potato
 Okra
 Carrots (related to dill, fennel, parsley)
 Spinach
 Swiss Chard and Beets

Now, what do you do to get started rotating? First, divide growing areas into separate spaces. Example, if you have 4 raised beds, come up with a 4 year plan. You must remember to consider different growing seasons. Designate cool season and warm season crops for each bed. Here is an example of a good rotation to help you get started:



Grow Your Own Salad Bar *by Craig Mauney, Horticulture Agent*

With the local food movement going on today, one of the most satisfying items on the dinner table is a salad you have harvested from your container garden or vegetable garden. Many of us have limited light or location for a traditional vegetable garden. But many of the leafy vegetables can be grown with lower light requirements and we can have a healthy salad on our table from our own landscape.

A salad can be really complicated with the variety of items included or it can be a simple lettuce, tomato and cucumber salad. Practically anything and everything can be added to a salad, so you can grow your own salad bar with just the vegetables you have the right conditions to grow.

What then, are the basic components of the Salad Bar Garden? The base of most salads is a leafy green vegetable of some kind – lettuce and spinach are two of the most popular starters, both easy to grow. Some other choices for the leafy part of your salad bar would

include Iceberg, leaf, and specialty lettuces. We like to have some color in the salad so consider the other ingredients like carrots, red and green bell peppers, radishes, onions, as well as herbs such as basil, thyme, dill and parsley. Now consider some exotic vegetables easy to grow – endive, escarole, chicory, and radicchio. Most of these types of greens are ready in the garden in about 5 weeks so a Salad Bar Garden can be one that is grown quickly.

Next decide how much salad you want. You can make the Salad Bar Garden as large or small as you want. If you only want a minimal garden then a large tub or other container will do, placing plants in rows or circles, for an attractive container garden. If you want to have fresh fixings for as long as possible, then plan on successive sowings of radishes, lettuces and spinach. Plantings should be about 10-14 days apart so you will have salad fixings maturing at different times. Below is a guide to help you with your Salad Bar Garden:

Crop	Start from Seed or Bedding Plant	Days to Maturity
Carrots	Seed	60-70
Cucumbers	Bedding Plant	50-60
Lettuce, Butterhead	Seed	50-55
Lettuce, Leaf	Seed	46-55
Lettuce, Romaine	Seed	55-60
Onions (green bunching)	Seed	60
Peppers	Bedding Plant	60-90
Radishes	Seed	25-30
Spinach	Seed	50-60
Summer Squash	Bedding Plant	50-60
Tomatoes	Bedding Plant	75-85



Design Tips for Your Vegetable Garden

by Craig Mauney, Horticulture Agent

No matter what your goals are, there are some easy tips and design principles you can follow to create an attractive vegetable garden for the home landscape. Listed below are some of them:

1. When planning the vegetable garden, keep these concepts in mind: contrast, balance, pattern and repetition.
2. Consider plants for climbing and mounding. Visualize in your mind how these shapes will look together as the plants grow.
3. Look for a variety of leaf shapes and sizes when you plant. Something crinkly will look good with something ferny.
4. Colorful varieties of vegetables make a great display such as multiple colors of peppers, scarlet beans, or purple cabbage.
5. Adding groups of similar plants throughout the garden ties the space together. This can even be done with flowers, for example, planting marigolds throughout the garden to give the put together feel.
6. More is better. One vegetable plant here and there is not as bold as a group of 5 or 7 of the same plant.

Consider height. Taller plants should be in the back of the bed unless you are using them to shade the hot afternoon sun from something cool season.



Container Gardening

by Craig Mauney, Horticulture Agent

Container gardening is a good way to add personality to your landscape. A container can add dimension or be a focal point. This can be done with the choice of container and plant material. The main concern one should have when deciding to grow plants in containers (whether the plants are annuals, perennials, vegetables, herbs or even small shrubs) is that all the plants must have the same cultural requirements such as light and water. You may combine any plants such as a small shrub and flowers as long as each plant's needs are the same. With some basic guidelines, really anything is possible with container gardens.

Containers: The container needs to be large enough to hold the roots of the plants when they are mature so read the plant label and make sure the container fits the plant. Make sure the container you use has a drainage hole in the bottom. A small rock on the hole will keep the pot draining. There are all types, shapes and sizes available in clay, cement, metal, wood and plastic resin. The new plastic resin is more lightweight and retains moisture well. They can be left outside all year without fear of cracking.

Design: The basic design for a container is to use three elements – something tall for a focal point, medium size dense plants to surround the focal, and showier species to soften the rim and possibly cascade over the side. Try experimenting with leaf colors, mixing

annuals and perennials.

Planting Medium: Never use garden soil in a container because it will compact more and not drain well. A better plan is to use a good quality soil-less potting mix. Container soils are best changed every 2 years.

Planting: Always start out with a clean container. Wash a used pot with a 10% bleach solution and rinse it out. Moisten the potting medium before planting. Position the plants in the container at the same depth they were in their original container. Make sure you have a minimum of 3 inches of soil beneath the root ball for additional root growth. An inch or so from the top of the container is needed for watering space.

Watering and Fertilizing: Watering requirements will be determined by the weather, size of pot, type of pot, and location of your container. The plant species should also be a main consideration when watering. Check the container daily and even twice per day on hot windy days. A good test is to stick your finger in the soil medium and only water if it feels dry. Water the container until the excess water runs out of the hole in the bottom of the container. If the soil has dried out so much that it is receding from the sides of the pot you must rehydrate the soil by submerging the pot in water until the soil stops bubbling or if the pot is too large, water several times until the soil is holding

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water again. Always dump out any water left over in a saucer to avoid soluble salt build up. Frequent watering flushes out a lot of the nutrients you provide. A regular fertilization schedule should be followed to keep the plants healthy and actively growing. Add a balanced fertilizer (20-20-20) to the soil according to the directions on the package at the time of planting. A good rule is to use soluble fertilizer and apply weekly at one-quarter the recommended rate.

Maintenance: During the growing season of the container, it will be important to check regularly for disease and insect problems. Cut out any dead or damaged plant parts and remove disease parts or plants. Spraying the foliage with water can usually control most insects. Keep the plants trimmed back to maintain a pleasing size and shape or to promote a thicker appearance. If bringing the plant indoors for winter, then do so before the heat in your house is turned on. This will allow the plant to adapt to the indoor conditions. The light and humidity is different indoors than outdoors. Any containers that can break with harsh weather should be stored in a basement or garage. Plants that go dormant can be cut back and

stored in the container but keep the soil barely moist throughout the winter months.



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