



GARDENING—THE BASICS

While it is not necessary to be a gardening expert in order to present the *Fresh from the Garden* lessons, it is helpful to have some basic knowledge. This section contains gardening information for beginners as well as some interesting facts about vegetable gardening.

For additional information see the Master Gardener Handbook, University publications, and a variety of national extension programs materials online.

GARDENERS' FAVORITE VEGETABLES

These are 10 of the most popular home grown vegetables and the percentage of gardeners cultivating them. How does your garden compare?

Tomatoes	85%	Lettuce	42%
Peppers	58%	Carrots	35%
Onions	50%	Corn	34%
Cucumbers	50%	Radishes	31%
Green Beans	43%	Cabbage	30%

Source: Old Farmer's Almanac Gardener's Companion Stats

HOME VEGETABLE GARDENING

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**SOME PARTS OF THE ORIGINAL PUBLICATION HAVE BEEN ADAPTED*

12 BASIC RULES FOR VEGETABLE GARDENING

Vegetables can be grown in containers, home yards, or community garden lots. To be successful, follow these 12 basic rules:

1. Plan your garden before you begin and plant only as large a garden as you can manage.
2. It is better to have a small productive garden than a large neglected one.
3. Remember that besides harvesting delicious vegetables, you will have to weed, water and control pests.
4. Grow crops that produce the most food in the space available.
5. Plant vegetables that are rich in nutrients.
6. Plant during the correct season for the vegetable you want to grow.
7. Don't limit your garden to just summer vegetables. Grow vegetables all year in Los Angeles County.
8. Most vegetables require 8 hours of full sun each day, but leafy vegetables can be grown in partial shade.
9. Prepare the soil properly.
10. Water and fertilize as needed.
11. Harvest vegetables when ripe.
12. Store vegetables promptly and properly, if they are not to be used immediately.

VEGETABLE CLASSIFICATION

Edible Parts of Vegetables

Vegetables that are roots:

Beets	Radishes
Carrots	Rutabagas
Jicama	Sweet Potatoes
Leeks Turnips	Turnips
Onions	Yams
Parsnips	

*Note: While potatoes and onions are called "root" vegetables, they are actually modified underground stems.

Vegetables that are stems:

Asparagus	Celery
Bamboo shoots	Mushrooms
Bok choy	Nopales (Cactus)
Broccoli	Rhubarb

Vegetables that are leaves:

Beet Greens	Lettuce
Brussels sprouts	Mustard Greens
Cabbage	Parsley
Chard	Spinach
Collard Greens	Watercress
Kale	

Vegetables that are flowers:

Broccoli
Cauliflower

Vegetables that are seeds:

Beans
Corn
Peas

Vegetables that are fruit:

Artichoke	Green Beans
Avocado	Peppers
Bell Peppers	Pumpkin
Cucumber	Squash
Eggplant	Tomatoes

VEGETABLE CLASSIFICATIONS

Seasonal

Most seasonal vegetables are classified as "cool-weather" or "warm-weather" crops. In Los Angeles County there are 3 to 4 different growing seasons. Yet, many gardeners grow only summer crops. By planting a spring crop, a summer crop, and a fall crop, a gardener can get 3 harvests from the same space. The idea involves planting your favorite cool-weather vegetables following them with warm-weather vegetables, and then finishing with another planting of cool-weather vegetables.

COOL-WEATHER VEGETABLE CROPS:

Artichokes	Kohlrabi
Asparagus	Lettuce
Beets	Mustard Greens
Broccoli	Onions
Brussels Sprouts	Parsnips
Cabbage	Peas
Carrots	Potatoes (white and sweet)
Cauliflower	Radish
Celery	Rutabagas
Chard	Spinach
Collard Greens	Turnip
Kale	

Cool-weather vegetables grow best and produce the best quality crops when average temperatures are 55°F to 75°F. The nutritional value of cool-weather vegetables is usually higher per pound and per square foot than that of warm-weather vegetables. The difference is due to the fact that vegetative parts of the plant, such as roots, stems, leaves, or immature flower parts, are consumed rather than fruits.

WARM-WEATHER VEGETABLE CROPS:

- Beans (green and lima)
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Okra
- Peppers
- Pumpkins
- Radish
- Squash (summer and winter)
- Tomatoes

Warm-weather vegetables require long, hot days and warm soil to mature. They grow best and produce the best quality crops when average temperatures are 65°F to 95°F. The nutritional value of warm-weather vegetables is usually lower per pound and per square foot than that of cool-weather crops because the "fruit" of the plant is eaten. Many warm-weather vegetables are really immature or mature fruits. In other words, vegetables such as tomatoes and squashes are fruits in the botanical sense, just as oranges are fruits.

Plant enough of each vegetable to meet your family's needs for fresh and preserved supplies. When choosing what to plant, consider such factors as disease resistance, maturity date, compactness of plant, and the size, shape, and color of the vegetable desired. Keep in mind past experiences with a given variety.

For more information, refer to the following common ground gardening publications:

- RAISED BEDS AND FURROW IRRIGATION (ENGLISH & SPANISH)
- COMPOST (ENGLISH & SPANISH)
- SOIL, SOIL AMENDMENTS & FERTILIZERS (ENGLISH & SPANISH)
- CHOOSING SEED VARIETIES (ENGLISH & SPANISH)
- TOOLS (ENGLISH & SPANISH)
- PLANNING AND PREPARING THE VEGETABLE GARDEN (ENGLISH & SPANISH)
- MULCH (ENGLISH & SPANISH)

HARVESTING AND STORING FRESH VEGETABLES--THE BASICS

A Consumers Guide to: HOME STORAGE OF VEGETABLES

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Ideally, fresh vegetables should be consumed soon after harvest or purchase. Since this is not always possible, you may need to store fresh vegetables for a few days before using. Long storage of fresh vegetables at home is generally not practical.

With a few exceptions, fresh vegetables keep best in the refrigerator.

Most home refrigerators maintain a temperature of about 40 ° F in the main storage space, with slightly warmer temperatures in the crisper (drawer) and on the door.

Preparation for storage:

Discard any part that shows evidence of decay. Immediately use any bruised or soft vegetables. Some vegetables, such as beets and turnips, require cleaning before storage; others, such as spinach and chard, should be washed just prior to preparation.

Remove tops of root vegetables, such as carrots. Wash to remove dirt, and then drain excess water thoroughly. Any vegetables stored in the refrigerator outside the crisper should be placed in plastic bags or plastic containers.

Do not mix ripe fruits with vegetables in the crisper. Ripe fruits produce ethylene gas which causes yellowing of green vegetables, rust colored spots on lettuce, toughening of asparagus, sprouting of potatoes, and bitter taste in carrots. Cabbage family vegetables (cabbage, broccoli, etc.) can pass their strong odors onto other refrigerated foods, so don't keep them for more than a few days. Radishes may cause off-flavors in fruits and leafy vegetables--do not store them next to one another. Do not store celery with onions or carrots.

For more information, refer to the following common ground publications:

- COMMON GROUND'S PUBLICATIONS
- HARVESTING (ENGLISH & SPANISH)
- STORING FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (ENGLISH & SPANISH)