



GROWING PLACES INDY



Vegetable Gardening 101

Vegetable gardening is fulfilling fun for the whole family, and makes getting fresh produce on the table super easy! If you're looking to start your own home garden, take a look at these quick tips before you get started.

What to Grow

When starting out with a garden, some vegetables are better to start out with than others. Here are a few options that are great for beginners:

- Tomatoes
- Zucchini squash
- Peppers
- Cabbage
- Bush beans
- Lettuce
- Beets
- Carrots
- Chard
- Radishes

Where to Plant

Picking a good location is also important. Here are some quick tips about where to plant your vegetables:

- Planting in a sunny location ensures the vegetables get the sunlight they need. Most need at least six hours of direct sunlight per day.
- Make sure to plant your vegetables in moist soil that drains well. Planting vegetables in a raised bed can alleviate soil drainage issues.
- If possible, plant your vegetables in a place free from strong winds, excessive foot traffic, and frequent flooding. This will ensure that the plants have the opportunity to grow properly.

Choosing the right size of plot is important for plant growth as well. Experts recommend starting with a small plot, and then eventually expanding as you gain gardening confidence and experience!

For a family of four, we recommend that you start out with a garden 11 rows wide and 10 rows long. Ideally, the garden should run north to south to allow best exposure to the sun.

It's also important to leave rows between sections of plants so you can easily access them and tend to them. Generally, it's recommended that you don't allow more than four feet of plants without access to them.

When and Where to Plant

Though you may not think it, choosing where each vegetable should be planted (and when) is essential to growing a flourishing garden.

First, let's consider *when* your vegetables should be planted. There are two varieties of plants: cool season and warm season. Cool season crops should be planted after spring frost and warm season crops should be planted in the same area later in the season.

Cool season crops include:

- Head lettuce
- Broccoli
- Onions
- Cauliflower

Warm season crops include:

- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Eggplant
- Watermelon

After you've considered whether your desired vegetables are warm season or cool season crops, you can work on where and how to place the vegetables in your garden. Here are some quick tips about the placement of your vegetables:

- Plant tall veggies on the north end of the garden to avoid them shading smaller plants
- Areas of your garden that are usually shaded should be reserved for cool season plants
- Reserve an area of your garden for any perennials (like asparagus or rhubarb)
- Consider which crops mature quickly and require more frequent harvesting (radishes, bush beans) and which have longer growing periods (tomatoes)
- Stagger your plantings! If you plant all of your lettuce seeds at once, you'll have to harvest it all at once. Reserve some seeds so you can enjoy your produce throughout the season