
Oregon State Agricultural College Extension Service

Corvallis, Oregon

Planting the Subsistence Vegetable Garden

By

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THE vegetable garden is especially valuable in times of emergency in providing healthful food for the family in both country and town. Many successful home gardeners not only claim that their garden is of the greatest importance and value in helping to reduce living costs but show evidence to support their claim. The larger the supply and the greater the variety of vegetables available from the garden, the less the amount of food that must be bought. A well-cared-for garden of 1/6 to 1/8 acre should contribute toward the family living produce having a gross value of \$35 to \$50.

Types of gardens. Subsistence gardens may take various forms, being either individual or collective. Land around the house or in a vacant lot can be transformed into a profitable garden, if the soil is fertilized and carefully prepared and the garden is properly planned, planted, and maintained. The vegetable garden area on individual farms throughout the state is of inestimable value in providing fresh food for the family and crops to be canned and stored. Community gardens of factory or mill are successfully operated either by having an individual garden area for each employee or a community garden, managed on a cooperative plan of planting and caring for an acreage of vegetables as a whole.

Climatic variations. Some areas in the state are better suited climatically to the growing of certain vegetables than others. For this reason crops grown should be those which thrive best under the prevailing conditions. Later on, trading of commodities between districts may be employed as a means of assuring a proper variety of products in regions of varying climate and resources.

Planning the garden. It is important to observe the usefulness of a garden in which the operations are carried out in a systematic order. The garden plan in this bulletin, therefore, is of value in guiding the grower as to the kind of crops grown, the arrangement of the crops, the approximate number of linear feet devoted to each vegetable, and the suggested spaces for planting. Attention is particularly called to the desirability of making successional seedings of several vegetables such as lettuce, snap beans, sweet corn, and peas.

The accompanying plan may have to be modified according to the size of the area planted. It may be extended over a greater area of ground if desirable, with a wider variety of crops produced. A planting plan for a more elaborate garden is available from the office of your county agricultural agent or from Oregon State Agricultural College, Corvallis, Oregon.

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics

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VEGETABLE GARDEN FOR THE AVERAGE FAMILY

SUGGESTED PLANTING PLAN FOR A SUBSISTENCE

	0'	25'	50'	75'	100'	
24"	—SPINACH (1st 3/10-15) followed by LATE CARROTS 6/10—			—SPINACH (2nd 4/1) followed by LATE CARROTS (6/15)—		
30"	—PEAS (1st 3/10) followed by LATE CABBAGE (7/1)—			—PEAS (2nd 3/25) followed by LATE CABBAGE (7/1)—		
30"	—PEAS (3rd 4/8) followed by LATE BEETS (7/1)—			—PEAS (4th 4/15) followed by FALL TURNIPS (8/1)—		
24"	—LETTUCE (1st 3/15)—		—LETTUCE (2nd 4/1)—	—SWISS CHARD (4/1)—	—FALL CABBAGE (6/1)—	
24"	—EARLY BEETS (3/15-4/1) followed by MUSTARD (9/1)—			—EARLY CARROTS (3/15-4/1)—		
24"	—ONIONS (4/10)—			—PARSNIPS (5/1)—		
24"	—CARROTS (2nd 4/15-20)—			—LETTUCE (3rd 4/15)—	—LETTUCE (4th 5/1)—	
30"	—SNAP BEANS (1st 4/25)—			—SNAP BEANS (2nd 5/10)—		
30"	—SNAP BEANS (3rd 5/25)—			—SNAP BEANS (4th 6/10)—		
36"	x					
36"	—SWEET—		—SWEET—	—SWEET—	—SWEET—	
36"	—CORN (1st 4/25)—		—CORN (2nd 5/10)—	—CORN (3rd 5/25)—	—CORN (4th 6/10)—	
36"						
48"-54"	—TOMATOES (5/15-25)—					
54"						
72"	—TOMATOES (5/15-25)—			—CUCUMBERS (5/10)—		
72"						
72"	Dates following names of vegetables indicate approximate time of planting in the garden.		—WINTER SQUASH (5/10)—		This plan is based on Western Oregon conditions	
36"			—POTATOES (4/1-3/20-4/15)—			

NOTES ON THE PLANTING PLAN

1. Dates of planting will be modified according to the region of the state where the garden is located. (Consult your county agricultural agent.) The dates following the vegetables in the plan are suggested for Western Oregon as a whole.

2. Successional seedings are desirable in growing beans, peas, lettuce, and sweet corn rather than planting the entire number of linear feet at one time. Continuous harvestings are thus possible, and there is less likelihood that a portion of the crop will spoil before being consumed.

3. Provision is made in the plan for following an early crop with a late one, such as spinach followed by early carrots, or early peas by late cabbage. These successions are usually possible even in non-irrigated sections, if the gardener will take advantage of late spring or early summer rainfall. In irrigated sections the land must be wet down to provide a moist seed-bed.

4. Spinach may be substituted for mustard in the early fall; or sprouting broccoli, an excellent fall and early winter crop, can be grown in a manner similar to late cabbage. An ample supply of greens can be grown by using spinach, chard, mustard, sprouting broccoli, or curly kale. Of these crops spinach must be grown during the cool months of the year, but chard is valuable for a period extending from June to December.

5. Contrary to general opinion, winter squash will not cross with pumpkin, cucumber, melon, or summer squash. The only instances of crossing occur with pumpkin and summer squash, the latter being in reality a summer pumpkin. These, therefore, should not be planted near each other, if seed is to be saved.

6. Sweet corn planting should preferably be in the form of a rectangular block rather than a row or two the full length of the garden.

AMOUNTS OF SEED REQUIRED FOR THE SUBSISTENCE VEGETABLE GARDEN, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR PLANTING

Vegetable	Number of linear feet of row planted	Amount of seed required	Variety	Remarks
Bean, snap.....	150 to 200	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb	Stringless green pod	Successional seedings desirable.
Beet.....	100	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb	Ky. Wonder	
Cabbage.....	100 to 150	1 oz	Detroit Dark Red	See plan for early and late plantings.
		$\frac{1}{2}$ oz	Glory	Late crop grown from transplanted plants.
Carrot.....	200	1 oz	Janish Ball Head	Plan for early and late plantings.
Chard, Swiss	25	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz	Chantenay	Will produce continuous supply of greens.
			Lucullus	
Corn, sweet.....	400	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb	Golden Bantam	Successional seedings.
Cucumber.....	50	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz	Davis Perfect	For slicing or pickling.
Lettuce.....	100	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz	New York	Successional seedings.
Mustard.....	50	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz	Giant Southern	For spring or fall.
			Curled	
Onion.....	50	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz	Yellow Danvers	Crop requires full season.
Parsnip.....	50	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz	Hollow Crown	Crop requires full season.
Pea.....	200	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs	Laxtonian or Stratagem	Successional seedings as per plan.
Spinach.....	100	1 oz	Giant Leaf	For spring or fall.
Squash.....	100	1 oz	Hubbard or Golden Delicious	12 to 15 hills provided in plan.
Tomato.....	100 to 150	$\frac{1}{4}$ oz	Bonny Best	Enough plants should be set to supply fruit for canning.
Turnip.....	50	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz	Purple top white globe	Seed in early fall.

Care should be used in planting seed, particularly as to thickness and depth. Where a certain amount of seed is provided for a number of linear feet and thinning is necessary, the gardener should take pains to sow uniformly and thinly. There is a tendency to sow the seed too thick, necessitating much thinning of plants and consequent waste of seed, plants and labor. The following table should be a guide as to the thickness of seeding and the average distance between plants as they stand in a solid row or hill.

SEEDING AND PLANT THINNING TABLE

Vegetable	Seed sown in solid row (SR) or hill (H)	Number of seeds sown per linear feet (SR) or hill (H)	Depth of seeding in inches	Distance between plants in row or number of plants in hill when thinned
Bean, snap—				
(bush)	SR	4-5	2-3	3- 4 in.
(pole)	H	4-5	2-3	3 plants
(pole)	SR	1-2	2-3	12-16 in.
Beet	SR	8-10	1	2- 3 in.
Carrot	SR	10-16	$\frac{1}{2}$	2- 3 in.
Chard, Swiss	SR	4-6	1	8-12 in.
Corn, sweet	H	4-5	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -3	2- 3 plants
Corn, sweet	SR	2-3	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -3	12-16 in.
Cucumber	H	5-7	1	2- 3 plants
Lettuce	SR	4-6	$\frac{1}{2}$	12-15 in.
Onion	SR	8-10	$\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 3 in.
Parsnip	SR	8-10	$\frac{1}{2}$	2- 3 in.
Squash	H	5-6	1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$	2- 3 plants
Turnip	SR	1	1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$	24 in.
Turnip	SR	8-10	$\frac{1}{2}$	2- 3 in.

NOTES

1. Depth of seeding varies with soil moisture and weather conditions. For example, early sweet corn should be covered more thinly than later seedings when the soil is drier and warmer.

2. Thinnings of plants may be used either as food in the case of chard or for planting to other parts of the garden as in lettuce.

3. Moderately liberal seedings per hill are desirable for squash, cucumber, etc., to insure a good stand of plants. In thinning, leave the most vigorous plants and as widely spaced as possible but at the suggested distances or number of plants per hill.

Soil preparation. Well prepared land is essential in vegetable growing. A fine seed-bed insures an even covering of seed, thereby improving the chances for a good stand of plants. Well-fitted land encourages plants to make wider and deeper roots. Soil moisture is also conserved for a longer time if the soil is thoroughly prepared previous to seeding or transplanting.

In fertilizing the soil, the manure should preferably be well rotted and fine, evenly distributed and well incorporated with the soil. A good time to apply rotted manure is after plowing and the first disking. Then spread the manure evenly and thoroughly work it into the land with disk, finishing with harrow and clod masher. If the soil is spaded, the manure can be turned in at the time of digging, followed by raking to prepare the seed-bed. Should the manure be coarse and not well rotted, it should be plowed under.

If there is an opportunity for watering the garden, leveling or grading the land to give it a slight slope saves a lot of labor later on in running the water alongside the rows of vegetables.