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www.newleafgardencenter.com

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May hours for both Stores: M-F 9-6, Sat. 9-4, Sunday 12-4



Vegetable Gardening – Dig In!

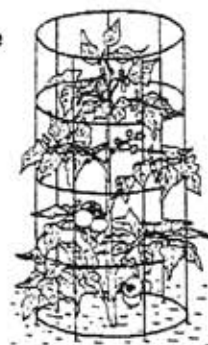
Vegetable gardening continues to be very popular as more and more people want to know where their food comes from. They want to know it's safe, Non-GMO and not treated with harmful chemicals. You don't need a lot of space and for a couple of bucks you can harvest hundreds of dollars of vegetables.

The top 10 veggies grown are:

1. Tomatoes
2. Cucumbers
3. Sweet Peppers
4. Beans
5. Carrots
6. Summer squash
7. Onions
8. Hot Peppers
9. Lettuce
10. Peas

Here are some tips for our new gardeners and a refresher for experienced gardeners:

- 1. Locate Your Garden** – Most vegetables require at least 8 hours of full sun each day. Avoid low, wet areas where the soil could stay soggy. You'll also need easy access to water.
- 2. Prepare the Bed** – Remove any grass or perennial weeds. Loosen the soil to a depth of 12-18". **Good soil is the single most ingredient for a good garden.** Most soil in this area is clay so you will absolutely need to amend it by adding plenty of organic matter such as peat moss, cattle compost or other compost. Also add gypsum, which breaks up clay soil, and a balanced garden fertilizer. Work in amendments & test your soil for nutrients and pH. Our soil tends to be more alkaline and lime may not be necessary. Home test kits are available or take a soil sample to your local Cooperative Extension Office.
- 3. Plant what you like to eat!** – Pay attention to the space and growing habits of each plant so you don't overcrowd your garden, thus stressing your plants and cutting down production.
- 4. Seeds or Transplants?** – Most veggies can be directly sown in the garden from seed, but plants like peppers and tomatoes will not have time to mature before frost from seed. Buy these as plants & any other veggies that you're only growing 1 or 2 plants of instead of a packet of seeds.
- 5. When to get started?** – Cool weather crops such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi, lettuce, onions, peas, potatoes and spinach can tolerate 45°F soil temperatures. Eggplant, melons, peppers, tomatoes, squash and basil can be planted around our average frost-free date of May 15th.
- 6. Helpful Tips** – Water seeds thoroughly after planting & keep consistently moist until young plants have their 1st set of true leaves. Set out transplants on calm, cool, cloudy days or cover them with garden fabric if you set them out when sunny, hot and windy. Water every day or two for the first couple of weeks. Remove weeds so they don't compete for moisture or nutrients. Fertilize again midseason, water as needed (gardens need about 1" of moisture a week) and keep checking for bugs and disease.
- 7. Support Your Plants** – Some plants, including pole beans and most tomatoes, need a cage, trellis or another type of support to grow properly and produce a good crop. They also save space, keep the garden neat & make harvesting easier.



So plant some veggies this year - you won't be disappointed!



Veggie Combo Planters?? Why NOT!!

Whether you have a garden or not, a few pots on the patio or deck will supply fresh veggies for months. When using dwarf or compact varieties of plants or seeds almost any spacious container will accommodate edibles. And with veggie containers, the bigger the container the better to maintain soil moisture and needed demands of developing crops. Use any type of container but make sure that it has drainage holes before planting. If not, drill holes in the bottom of the pot and add 2-3 inches loose gravel or large mulch so roots won't sit in soggy soil. Use a high-quality lightweight potting mix. This will hold enough moisture for the plant's growth, will drain well and allow for easy root penetration. Avoid using ordinary garden soil, which is too heavy and may contain disease organisms, insect eggs or weed seeds. Feed your container plants regularly

with an extended slow-release plant food to add necessary nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium to the soil. Potted plants may require more watering so be sure to check daily. Some good varieties of vegetables for pots would include:

SEEDS: Beans, Beets, Kale, Lettuce and Salad Greens, Spinach, Swiss Chard, Parsley, Peas, Radishes, and small Carrot varieties

PLANTS: Hot and Sweet Peppers, grape or bush type Tomatoes, bush Cucumbers (add a trellis to your pot), Eggplant, Onions (This works great for green onions: plant pots full, 3"-4" apart and pull as needed or plant around the edge of your tomato or pepper plants)

Container Gardening...Beautiful & Easy!

- Select a pot that has drainage holes. Place a thin layer of drainage materials in bottom of pot.
- Fill container three quarters full of potting soil. Mix in appropriate amount of continuous release plant food.
- Use the formula of thriller, filler & spiller. A "thriller" is a tall centerpiece plant that will serve as a sturdy backbone. Select your thriller and build around it. Next add a few spicy "fillers" – foliage plants that will complement but not overwhelm the main plant. Finally add a "spiller" or a plant that just tumbles over the edge of the pot and echoes or contrasts with the pot's other plants shape, color or texture.
- Fill in around plant roots with more potting soil and press lightly. Water thoroughly.
- Don't forget that you can plant combo planter of vegetables, too!

Throughout the season water your container regularly especially on hot days. Pinch off spent blooms as needed. After 3-4 weeks, feed regularly with a water-soluble fertilizer. **ENJOY!**



SOIL FOR RAISED GARDEN BEDS - We have had quite a few questions on what to use for soil in raised beds:

For one 4 x 4-foot raised bed (Approximate quantities - Multiply amounts to fill larger beds.)

6 bags (40# each) top soil 2 bags (40#) Michigan peat moss 4 bags (40# each) compost and cow manure

We carry all three of these bags components at our stores!

For more information on Raised Bed Gardening, visit either store and ask for our FREE handout on the subject!