

Organizing your Vegetable Buddies by Fran Benton

This time of year I am always busy planning my spring garden. What veggies will I plant, where will I plant them? Most importantly I consult my “never grow this again!” list. These are the plants that grew too much and produced nothing (loofah squash) or the ones that came up as a sickly miserable seedling and despite your tender care, died. These, of course, are the most expensive seeds in the catalogue. They are the ones that give you a very specific thrill at this time of year when you are planning and scheming.

This year I am going to redo the arrangement of veggies in the raised beds and do it right this time. But what should it be – rows, blocks, mixed with flowers? Some things have to be in certain patterns like corn. Corn is wind pollinated and needs to be in a block. Lettuce can go anywhere just remember where you planted it! Speaking of lettuce you could start some inside right now under a light and feast on it before you even get the other seeds in the ground. Try continuously planting lettuce for a harvest of tasty small plants. Perhaps you might like to grow some micro greens. This is sort of like eating your seedlings only way more fun!



Every year I buy some unreasonable seeds. Yes, something silly just for the fun of it! So I am planting cotton. Huh? Cotton as in cotton fibre? Yes! Cotton is a member of the mallow family and has the scientific generic name of *Gossypium*. Sounds like an over sharing neighbour! This plant is a handsome shrub and produces bolls that are filled with cotton fibre. It's a bit of a challenge in our climate to get the cotton plant to produce full bolls but I have done it before and it was fun. They do take some space and need lots of water. I am going to try them in containers and maybe even overwinter them in the garage but we'll see how that goes! In the meantime we can muse over those seed catalogues or take a trip to the garden centre for more ideas. Happy scheming!