



Vegetable Planting Guide for the Brazos Valley

Gardeners in the Brazos Valley can grow various types of vegetables year round. Almost anyone can be a successful gardener in our area as long as they follow a few rules.

LOCATION

Choose the sunniest area possible for planting your vegetables. Generally, seven hours of full sun is adequate for most plants.

SOIL PREPARATION

For heavy soils, till or spade to a depth of 8 to 10 inches. For each 100 square feet work the following into the soil:

- 27 bags weed free Soil Mix
- 4 lbs 12-24-12 or similar vegetable fertilizer

- OR -

- 14 bags Back To Nature
- 4 lbs 12-24-12 or similar vegetable fertilizer

- PLUS -

- 5 lbs bone meal
- 50 lbs manure
- 20 lbs gypsum
- Be sure to turn the soil several times to insure an even distribution of all additives.

For most Brazos Valley soils, where clay is an issue, a raised bed is the surest way to go. Do not try to till or cultivate heavy clay.

VEGETABLE VARIETIES

Heirloom Gardens recommends consulting with your County Extension Agent for a list of the best vegetables for the Brazos Valley. Or come in and visit with us.

Spring vegetables to plant will include: beans, corn, cucumber, eggplant, cantaloupe, okra, onions (from sets), peas,

peppers, potatoes, spinach, squash, tomatoes, and watermelon.

In the fall, plant the following: Beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, kale, lettuce, mustard, onions (from seed or sets), English peas, potatoes, radishes, spinach, and turnips.

PLANTING GUIDE

Many vegetables may be planted in both spring and fall gardens. Generally, root vegetables and large-seeded vegetables are sown directly in the ground, while the smaller seeded vegetables are started in peat pots. During spring and fall vegetable planting season, Heirloom Gardens carries large selections of started plants for the gardener who does not want to chance growing from seed. These started plants will usually bear 2 to 3 weeks earlier than those started from seed.

FERTILIZING

It takes large quantities of phosphorus to get a plant to bloom and produce fruit. Therefore, regular feeding of vegetable plants is a must. Consult an Heirloom Gardens Texas Certified Nursery Professional for the latest and best formulations of fertilizers on the market. ALWAYS READ DIRECTIONS ON THE PACKAGE CAREFULLY!

INSECT PROBLEMS

Normally, dusting vegetables plants frequently will keep down any serious problems — or, you can use sprays instead. READ THE ENTIRE LABEL OF ANY PRODUCT BEFORE USING!

DUSTS

Dust applicators are best for dusting. They are inexpensive and make materials go much further. Since no mixing has to be done, and there are no hoses to bother with, dusting is generally easier than spraying when dealing with small plants.

Sprays

Heirloom Gardens carries three types of sprayers:

- **Hand Mistors** - These come in several sizes and styles. All operate the same way.
- **Hose end applicators** - Attached to a water hose, these operate by siphoning. As water passes through the applicator, it draws spray material from the container and mixes it.
- **Pressure Sprayers** - These usually come in one or two gallon capacity. The insecticide is pre-mixed and poured into the container. Once the sprayer is pumped to the desired pressure, it is ready to operate.

FUNGICIDES

From time to time, you may detect the presence of a fungus on vegetable plants. These are usually more prevalent when nights are cool and days are warm. For correct identification, bring a sample of the fungus into Heirloom Gardens.

MULCHING

Controlling weeds after they have taken over the vegetable garden is undoubtedly the hardest part of gardening. Preventing them in the first place is by far the easiest plan.

Mulching the garden is the most effective method of weed control. Not only does it discourage weeds, it helps to conserve moisture and keep the roots cool. At the end of the season, all of the mulch materials may be tilled under to help enrich the soil.

Crop Rotation

Experienced gardeners know the value of proper crop rotation. They are aware that the same crop planted in the same spot year after year decreases productivity. This is because soil borne diseases, soil insects, nematodes, and toxic chemical residues tend to collect and build up in a given area. As these detrimental factors increase, crop yield decreases. To counteract this process, you should rotate the location of vegetables each season.

Each family of vegetables has certain unique effects on the soil, and most vegetables within a given family are susceptible to the same diseases and insects. Therefore, it is

important to know which vegetables are included in each family. The common backyard vegetables generally fall into nine distinct families.

- The **pea or legume family** includes peas and beans of all kinds.
- The **mustard family** is one of the largest. It includes cabbage, collards, Brussels sprouts, kale, cauliflower, broccoli, turnips, and radishes.
- The **goosefoot family** includes beets and spinach.
- The parsley family includes carrots, parsley, and celery.
- The **nightshade family** includes potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, and all varieties of peppers.
- Vinecrops are in the **gourd family**: squash, pumpkin, watermelon, cantaloupe, and cucumber.
- The **composite family** includes lettuce, dandelion and artichoke.
- The **lily family** is represented by garlic and chives.
- The **grass family** is where sweet corn is classified.

Rotating the placement of each single vegetable is not enough. It's rotation of family groups that is important.