



STARTING A VEGETABLE GARDEN

RESOURCE SHEET



THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY

SITE SELECTION

There are several important factors to consider when selecting your garden site.

Garden success depends on the following factors:

- Sun exposure (minimum 6-8 hours)
- Consistent moisture (ensure a water source is nearby)
- Well-draining soil and soil health
- Airflow
- Easy access

Planning a vegetable garden: <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/planning-vegetable-garden>

Planting a vegetable garden:

<https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/planting-vegetable-garden>

Planning the vegetable garden: <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/SP291-M.pdf>

In urban settings, knowing the former use of the site you want to grow on is important due to potential soil contamination by heavy metals, particularly lead. Area where buildings were removed or where paint has chipped off homes can potentially have unsafe lead levels. Having a soil test that tests the lead level is the best way to find out the soil lead level. For more information see:

Lead safety for the home gardener: https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/lead_safety_for_the_home_gardener

GARDEN PLANNING

There are several steps to garden planning; selecting a site, deciding what to plant, etc. Below are several resources to help you with garden planning.

Many seed packets will have a map of the United States that give you range of when to plant whatever seed is in the packet. This recommendation is based on growing zones and frost dates. To determine your growing zone use the USDA plant hardiness map: <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>

Most of Summit County is zone 6b but there may be areas of microclimates that are higher or lower.

In general, the last frost date in Summit County is the middle of May, however, there is always the chance of a last season frost.

Vegetable can be classified as either cool season or warm season. Cool season crops are those that can tolerate and grow at cooler air and soil temperatures. Warm season crops require warm soil and air temperatures to grow properly.

Cold season vs. warm season vegetables

<https://extension.psu.edu/cool-season-vs-warm-season-vegetables>

When to plant your vegetable garden: https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource007043_Rep10191.pdf

Direct seed v. transplant-Some plants are more suited to direct seeding (being planted directly in the soil) and some are best grown from transplant.

Seeds vs. Transplants for vegetable gardens

<https://warren.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/03/seeds-vs-transplants-for-vegetable-gardening/>

Vegetable planting and transplanting guide

<https://extension.psu.edu/vegetable-planting-and-transplanting-guide>

Proper spacing <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/vegguide/step02.cfm>

Intensive spacing for raised beds

https://www.johnson.k-state.edu/docs/lawn-and-garden/in-house-publications/vegetables/Intensive%20Spacing%20for%20Raised%20Beds_13.pdf

SOIL BUILDING

Any in-ground vegetable garden should start with a soil test.

Currently many University labs are closed or working at lowered capacity.

This fact sheet lists several regional commercial labs that are open; call before sending the sample.

<https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/hyg-1132>

Below are resources regarding soil health:

Interpreting a soil test report

<https://extension.psu.edu/interpreting-your-soil-test-reports>

<https://extension.uga.edu/content/dam/extension-county-offices/bartow-county/mgev/trainees/How%20to%20Read%20a%20Soil%20Test%20Report%20-%20Excerpt.pdf>

Adding organic matter and other organic gardening techniques

<https://extension2.missouri.edu/g6220>

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/add-organic-matter-improve-garden-soils>

Smart gardeners improve their soil and weed control with organic mulch

https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/smart_gardeners_improve_their_soil_and_weed_control_with_organic_mulch

No turn composting

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/techniques/three-methods-no-turn-cold-composting>

Lasagna garden/sheet mulch – using readily accessible materials

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/12281/sheetmulching.pdf>

IN GROUND BEDS, RAISED BEDS and CONTAINERS GARDENS

There are many options when it comes to small scale gardening. Raised bed and container gardening are two options.

Raised beds vs. Inground planting <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C1027-3&title=Raised%20Beds%20vs.%20In-Ground%20Gardens>

To start new in ground beds use a soil solarization method to kill the grass in a SMALL area with a tarp, plastic sheeting, cardboard, etc.

Soil solarization

<https://gardenningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/pests-and-diseases/pests/management/soil-solarization.html>

Solarization in the garden

<https://local.extension.umn.edu/local/article/solarization-the-garden>

Building raised beds

Creative raised bed material

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/raised-beds/>

Raised bed checklist

<https://aces.illinois.edu/news/raised-bed-checklist>

Container gardening

<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/containergardening/herbveggie.cfm>

<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/Container-Vegetable-Gardening-PDF>

WEED CONTROL

Weeds are the downfall to made well intended gardeners. You can get ahead of weeds by using materials you have on hand such as newspaper, leaves, grass clippings, and cardboard as a mulch. The following Fact Sheets describe many weed control strategies.

Controlling weeds with cultivating and mulching

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/controlling-weeds-by-cultivating-mulching/>

Controlling weeds in the home gardens

<https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/controlling-weeds-home-gardens>

Get an early start on vegetable garden weed control

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/get_an_early_start_on_vegetable_garden_weed_control

FURTHER INFO AND QUESTIONS: Email or call your local extension office:

OSU Extension Summit county

Jacqueline Kowalski kowalski.124@osu.edu or 234-226-6633

Extension Ask an Expert <https://extension.osu.edu/ask-an-expert>

Summit County Master Gardener Volunteers

<http://www.summitmastergardeners.org/resources/email-a-question/>