

PROPER PLANT ROTATION FOR THE HOME GARDNER

Plant rotation in your garden is a very effective way to help prevent diseases, aid in increasing soil nutrients and to decrease insect damage. Because many diseases are found in the soil, continued planting of the same plant in the same place, year after year, will increase the disease damage to your plants. Since different plants use varying amounts of nutrients, crop rotation will also aide in helping to keep the soil from being depleted of many of these nutrients. Rotation will also help to decrease destructive insect and nematode populations. Also, vegetable crops belonging to the same family should not be planted in the same locations. For example, tomato, pepper, eggplant and potato are of the same family. For a more complete list of vegetable families, check the internet for “vegetable plant families”.

Rotation can be difficult for the gardener who has a small area, but it should be done as best as you can. In putting together a rotation plan it is very helpful to make a map of your garden, showing where all of the current plantings are located. You should also include the dimensions of each planted area on your layout. List, for each planted area, the number of years that you have been growing the same plant in the same area. When this is done, a rotation plan can then be laid out for each year of planting. Make sure proper sunlight, shade and soil requirements needed for each plant are known. Then, rotate each plant to a planned bed, never leaving a plant family for more than two years in the same bed. This procedure will help you to produce a better, healthier crop with fewer disease problems as well as boosting the nutrient levels.

For more information, go to tulsamastergardeners.org.