



## Have Fun this Summer with a Square Foot Garden

By UC Master Gardener, Cristina K.

Square foot gardening is an easy way to make the most of a raised bed and grow lots of vegetables in a small space, whether at home or in your school garden. Here's what you'll need:

- a wooden raised bed filled with soil
- measuring tape
- marker
- thumbtacks
- a roll of good strong twine
- scissors
- vegetable seeds or seedlings
- compost

To start off, use your measuring tape and marker to create a grid. Starting at one corner, make a mark every 12 inches along the perimeter of your raised bed. Then press thumbtacks partway down into each mark until you have thumbtacks every twelve inches around the bed.

Next, wrap twine around the base of the first thumbtack and push the thumbtack all the way in, so that it holds the twine in place. Pull the twine across the bed to the thumbtack directly across. Wrap the twine around the thumbtack and push the thumbtack in, just as you did for the first one. Cut off the excess twine with your scissors.

Repeat this to create as many 12x12-inch squares as your raised bed will allow. (Look at the attached sketch if you need help picturing your grid.)

If you have a 4x4 foot bed, you will have a 16-square grid. If your bed is 3x4 feet, you will have a 12-square grid. (How many squares will you have if your bed is 4x6 feet?) Each of those squares equals one square foot.

Once you have built your grid, you can plant the following vegetables in each square foot:

1 plant per square - zucchini, eggplants, peppers, tomatoes\*

2 plants per square - basil, cucumbers\*

4 plants per square - lettuce, marigolds, parsley, bush beans, arugula

9 plants per square - spinach, pole beans\*, beets, cilantro

16 plants per square - radishes, carrots, onions, garlic

\* If you're growing tomatoes, cucumbers or pole beans, ask a grown-up to help you attach a trellis at the back (north side) of the bed. This way, these tall plants can grow upward without casting shade on all the other plants. (See the sketch.)

Make sure you water your square-foot bed regularly and sprinkle in some compost once a month, so you can enjoy a bed full of garden-fresh veggies all summer long!

# SQUARE FOOT GARDEN



Digital Illustration by Cristina K.