

PLANNING A GARDEN

Location

Locate the garden in an area that will not interfere with the home landscape. A sunny, level area away from large trees is preferable because tree roots compete for soil nutrients and water. A source of water should be accessible for periods when irrigation is necessary.

In many Kansas locations, protection from wind is desirable. Take advantage of fences, small shrubs, or buildings that provide a windbreak.

Soil

Vegetables grow best in well-drained, fertile soil. Sandy loam soils are ideal for vegetables. Most home gardens, however, do not have this soil composition. Compost or manure spread over the garden and worked in with a garden tiller will improve not only fertility but also soil tilth. Adding organic material such as manure or compost is an important practice in successful gardening.

Selecting what to grow

A wide variety of different vegetables can be grown in Kansas. Space available and individual preferences play an important part in deciding what to grow.

Beans, beets, summer squash, peppers, tomatoes, lettuce, onions, radishes, and turnips are well adapted for growth when space is limited.

Sweet corn, vine squash, cucumbers, pumpkins, and melons require more space for growth and should be considered only if adequate space is available. Don't be afraid to experiment with unfamiliar vegetables, but plan to be able to use most of the vegetables you produce.

Most home gardeners have too much produce maturing at the same time. This is desirable if you plan to can or freeze the vegetables. For table use, it is best to stagger plantings. Plant a few radishes every 4-5 days instead of all at once. This will provide a steady supply of radishes of ideal maturity over a longer period of time. Also stagger plantings of lettuce, beans, sweet corn, and peas.

Optimizing garden space

Spinach, lettuce, radishes, peas, and green onions can be harvested early in the season. The same space is then available for late-season crops of beans, eggplant, tomatoes, or potatoes. Plant lettuce, radishes, or spinach between

potatoes, cabbage, or other cole crops. Before the potatoes or cole crops get very large, the other vegetables will have been harvested.

Select a place along one side of the garden for crops such as rhubarb, asparagus, strawberries, or bush fruits. These perennials will continue to grow next year without replanting. If planted in the garden, they will be in the way during tilling operations.

Make a sketch

Draw a scale model of your garden space and plan the garden using the above information. Allow everyone involved to participate by suggesting their favorite vegetables. Make notes on the plan and save it as a reference for next year's garden. You can also use this plan when ordering seeds and plants.

Obtaining seeds and plants

In choosing varieties for the home garden, consider factors such as disease resistance, yield, maturity date, size, shape, color, and flavor. Seed companies and state agricultural research stations are constantly developing and testing improved vegetable varieties and procedures. The following sources of information are useful when choosing varieties:

- * Ask your local Extension agent or the KSU Cooperative Extension Service for the publication "Recommended Vegetable Varieties for Kansas."

- * Use varieties that have performed well in past years for you or other gardeners you know.

- * If you plan a special use for a particular vegetable, such as freezing, exhibiting, or canning, check with your local Extension agent or study your seed catalog for recommendations.

- * Check with your local seed store or garden center for advice on what to plant.

If you do not have a hotbed or coldframe you may want to buy vegetable transplants for crops that require transplanting to the garden. These can be obtained from local greenhouses or seed and garden centers. Again, make sure the varieties are what you want to produce.

Plan, then purchase the seeds and plants you want so that you will have them when you need them for your garden.

Tools and supplies

While several items are essential to raise a garden, it is not necessary to have a lot of equipment. If your friends have gardens, you might share equipment and supplies. Select supplies according to the size of garden you want.

Mini-garden (less than 100 sq. ft.)

Spading fork or shovel

Hoe

Trowel

Small sprayer or duster
Pointed stakes and labels
String and yardstick
Fertilizer
Fungicides and insecticides as desired
Sprinkling can
Compost, manure, peat moss, sawdust, or vermiculite

Family garden (between 100 and 1,000 sq. ft.)

Garden tiller
Hoe and trowel
Small sprayer
Pointed stakes and labels
String and yardstick
Fertilizer
Fungicides and insecticides as desired
Hose
Compost, manure, peat moss, sawdust, or vermiculite

Large garden (more than 1,000 sq. ft.)

Garden tractor
Hoe
Sprayer or duster
Wheel cultivator
Fertilizer spreader
Wheelbarrow
Pointed stakes and labels
String and yardstick
Fertilizer
Fungicide and insecticides as desired
Hose
Compost, manure, peat moss, sawdust, or vermiculite

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