VEGETABLES

How Much Can a Vegetable Garden Save in Food Costs

Gail Langellotto, Statewide Coordinator of the Oregon State University Master Gardener Program, wrote a blog post a couple years ago summarizing studies regarding the savings a home vegetable garden can provide.

Gail looked at 8 studies and summarized the results. Values were adjusted to 2012 values. Overall, gardens had an average value of $0.74 per square foot of garden and a median value of $0.62 per square foot. That would equal $148 for a modest 200 square foot garden using the average value. Most of these studies included the cost of establishing the garden the first year. These costs would certainly be less in the years following.

Also, interesting were the crops that provided the greatest return per square foot. Those crops were tomatoes, salad greens, beets, broccoli and potatoes. However, be sure to plant crops that will actually be eaten. Vegetables that will not be used are a waste of time and money. To see much more detail, go to Gail’s blog post at http://tinyurl.com/ajrnebb (Ward Upham)

Sources for Tomato Seed

Gardeners who start tomatoes from seed often have difficulty locating a source for specific varieties. We have put together a table identifying sources for all of the tomatoes we recommend at http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/L41.pdf*. We have also included a few old standby varieties including some heirlooms and a number of newer varieties that have done well in tomato trials. We could not include all possible sources of seed but tried to include the more common companies used by home gardeners. Let us know if there is a source you feel needs to be added. The document can be found at http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/doc4034.ashx. Note the first page identifies varieties and sources and the second page gives the web address and phone number for each company.
* No sources were found for Sun Leaper or Sunmaster

Note that we have also requested local sources of seed and/or transplants in an accompanying article. That information will be shared in a later newsletter. (Ward Upham)

**Call for Local Sources of Vegetable Seed**

If your business sells vegetable seed, let us know and we will make a list that our subscribers can link to. We need the following information:

- Name of Business:
- Business Address:
- Phone Number:
- E-mail (if applicable):
- Web site (if applicable):
- Will you ship or in-store sales only:
- Prepackaged seed only or will you custom-package:
- Do you also sell transplants:

Send the info to: wupham@ksu.edu

We will link to a list of those businesses that respond in a future newsletter. (Ward Upham)

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**“Selling at Farmer’s Markets” Webinar for KSRE Professionals**

With the growing interest in farmers markets, KSRE professionals across the state may be getting an increasing number of questions regarding what products can and can’t be sold at a farmers market without a license or how vendors can sell things as safely as possible. In response to this, the food safety sub-group of the Nutrition, Food Safety and Health PFT will be hosting a free zoom webinar for KSRE professionals from 11AM- noon on Tuesday, January 27. Londa Nwadike, KSU and MU State Extension Food Safety Specialist will present on “Selling at Farmers Markets- regulations and food safety best practices” and will also provide information on the updated KS Farmers Market regulations and best practices publication, which was done jointly with KDA. She can also answer questions at that time regarding the upcoming regional farmers market vendor workshops and the state Farmers Market conference. Adam Inman from the KDA Food Safety and Lodging regulatory program will also be on the webinar and available to answer questions from KSRE professionals.

The power point slides and webinar recording will be made available after the webinar.

To join the webinar, use the following information on the day of the webinar:

- Join from PC, Mac, iOS or Android: [https://ksu.zoom.us/j/878118682](https://ksu.zoom.us/j/878118682)
- Or join by phone:
  - +1 (415) 762-9988 or +1 (646) 568-7788 US Toll
  - Meeting ID: 878 118 682
- International numbers available: [https://ksu.zoom.us/zoomconference](https://ksu.zoom.us/zoomconference)
- Or join from a H.323/SIP room system:
  - Dial: 162.255.36.11 (US East) or 162.255.37.11 (US West)
  - Meeting ID: 878 118 682 (Londa Nwadike)
Newer Fluorescent Lights Available for Indoor Gardeners

Many gardeners use fluorescent lights to start young vegetable and flower plants during the spring or to grow certain houseplants all year long.

Traditionally, we have used fixtures with T-12 lamps suspended a few inches above the tops of the plants. However, T-12 lamps are fading away due to newer lamps that are a better choice for indoor gardens. These are known as T-8 and T-5 lamps. The number after the “T” refers to the diameter of the lamp in eighths of an inch.

Therefore, a T-12 lamp is 12/8 or 1.5 inches in diameter and are what most people are familiar with. A T-8 is 8/8 or 1 inch in diameter, and a T-5 is 5/8 of an inch in diameter.

So, does a smaller diameter mean less light? Not at all. In fact, the T-5 can be the brightest of the three. Another advantage for these newer lamps is they use less electricity per lumen. Our traditional 48-inch T-12 is rated at 40 watts. However, there are newer styles of T-12's that are 34 watts. The T-8 is rated at 32 watts and the T-5 at 28 watts.

This sounds too good to be true. Are there drawbacks? Maybe so or maybe not. First is cost if you have to replace T-12 fixtures to convert to a T-8 system. However, newer fixtures may be able to handle either T-12's or T-8's. Therefore, if you purchased fluorescent fixtures in the last few years, check to see if they are rated for T-8's before replacing them. Note that lamp costs are comparable between T-12's and T-8's. The T-5 lamps are significantly more expensive and cost over twice as much as either a T-12 or T-8.

The question becomes, is it worth it? If you have a T-12 fixture that is rated for T-12's only and are satisfied with your results, then maybe not. However, if you are investing in new fixtures or have fixtures that can use either T-12's or T-8's, then go with the T-8's. They will use less energy, last longer and provide more light. (Ward Upham)

Conservation Trees from the Kansas Forest Service

The Kansas Forest Service offers low-cost tree and shrub seedlings for use in conservation plantings. Plants are one to two years old and sizes vary from 5 to 18 inches, depending on species. Orders are accepted from now through the first full week in May each year, but order early to insure receiving the items you want.

Orders are shipped from the second week of March through May 5. Approved uses for these plants include windbreaks, wood lots,
riparian plantings, wildlife habitat and Christmas trees. They may not be used for landscape (ornamental) plantings or grown for resale.

All items are sold in units. Each single species unit consists of 25 plants. For example, a unit of Eastern red cedar has 25 trees per unit. Though a single species unit is most commonly purchased, four special bundles are also available including a songbird bundle, quail bundle, pheasant bundle and wildlife mast bundle.

Tree planting accessories are also available including marking flags, root protective slurry, rabbit protective tubes, weed barrier fabric and tree tubes. If there have been problems with deer browsing on young trees, the tree tubes are a must.

For details and an order form, go to: https://www.kansasforests.org/public_saps/Welcome.aspx

Order forms are also available from local K-State Research and Extension offices. (Ward Upham)

To view Upcoming Events: http://tinyurl.com/fswqe

The web version includes color images that illustrate subjects discussed. To subscribe to this newsletter electronically, send an e-mail message to cdipman@ksu.edu or wupham@ksu.edu listing your e-mail address in the message.

For questions or further information, contact: wupham@ksu.edu

Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.