



GIFT GARDENS
(Gainesville Initiative For Tasty Gardens)
GROWING GUIDE

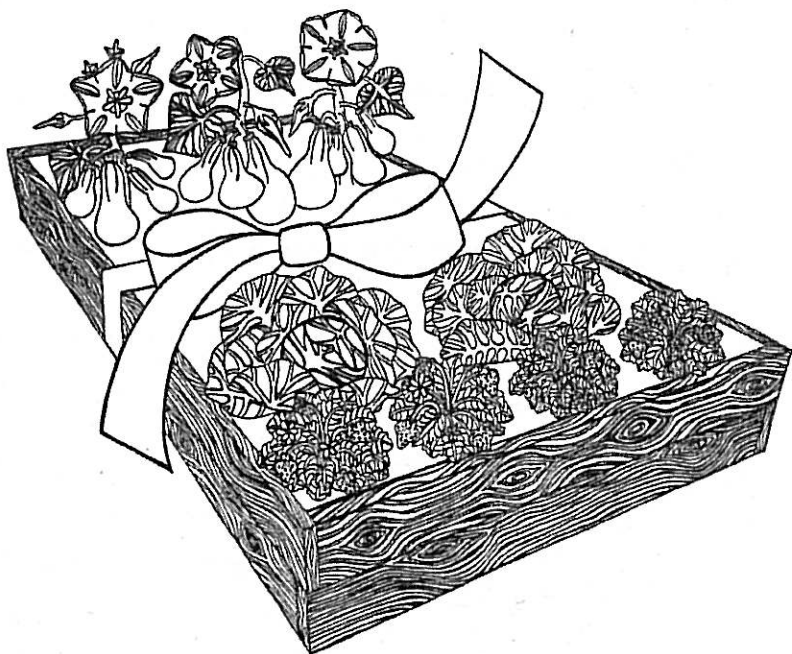


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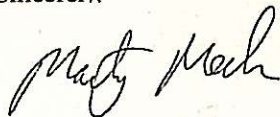
DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Our hope is that this guide may help in the growth of your garden. Your garden, with due care, will be a source of fresh food, joy, exercise and beauty for generations to come. Heartfelt thanks to the people, government entities and businesses helping to make this project possible and take root through donations and support.

So get up, get out, plant some seeds or plants, and, after investing your time and care, enjoy the bounty that your garden will produce. We stand ready and able to furnish information and ongoing assistance.

May you receive a gentle rain when you need it, sunshine when you don't and experience all the benefits and joys from your time in the garden.

Sincerely,



Marty Mesh
Executive Director
Florida Organic Growers

GAINESVILLE INITIATIVE FOR TASTY GARDENS (GIFT GARDENS)

The Gainesville Initiative for Tasty Gardens (GIFT Gardens) builds raised bed vegetable gardens for low-income families and institutions that support them. By providing physical and educational resources, GIFT Gardens aims to increase food production in Alachua County, to increase self-sufficiency of residents, and to beautify neighborhoods. To date, there are GIFT Gardens at 309 locations across Alachua County, including 17 schools, 7 churches, and 17 community centers.

GIFT Gardens recipients receive:

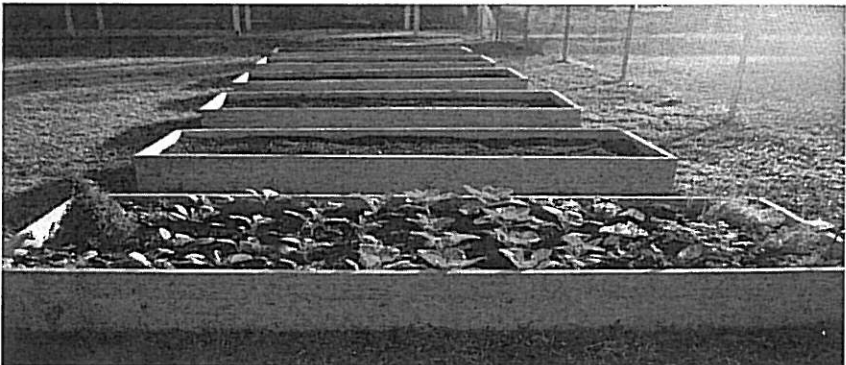
- ∞ Raised-bed garden filled with fertile soil
- ∞ Free seeds and seedlings at time of installation
- ∞ One year membership to the Grow Gainesville Seed Library
- ∞ Free organic fertilizer after the second growing season
- ∞ Ongoing assistance and gardening advice when needed

GIFT Gardens recipients commit to:

- ∞ Plant the garden each season
- ∞ Maintain the garden
- ∞ Harvest vegetables
- ∞ Take a follow-up survey 6 months after the installation
- ∞ Complete harvest study
- ∞ Ask FOG or other organic gardening professionals for assistance and advice when needed

If you move from your current location, can no longer maintain your GIFT Garden or wish to have your garden removed, please contact a FOG GIFT Gardens Coordinator at 352.377.6345 to remove your garden and redistribute it to another program participant.

If you have any questions or need on-site assistance with your GIFT Garden, please call FOG at 352.377.6345 or e-mail fog@foginfo.org.



ADVANTAGES OF RAISED BEDS

Soil Control – Raised-bed gardeners have control over soil mix and fertility. Growing plants in raised beds is a logical choice for gardeners with poor and degraded soils in their yards.

Better Drainage – Raised beds help excess water to more easily drain from the soil, preventing flooding and providing an optimum environment for root growth.

Higher Yields – Intensive planting in raised beds means more plants can be grown in a smaller area than with conventional row-cropping techniques.

Expanded Growing Season – Better drainage speeds soil warming and allows earlier spring planting. In wet seasons, soil dries out faster, permitting plantings between rains.

Easy Maintenance – Because plants are growing above the level of walkways, less stooping is required for weeding, watering and other chores. Intensively planted raised beds provide dense foliage cover, shading out much weed growth.

Eliminates Wasted Nutrients – No need to add compost, manure or fertilizer to the entire garden site, just the raised-bed growing areas.

Easy to move – Empty raised-bed frames can be easily picked up and moved around the yard or to new sites.

Conserve Water – You only have to water the garden itself; no water is wasted on the exterior.

Easy Reaching – The design allows for easy reaching so there is no need to strain or stretch to tend the garden.

PLANNING AND DESIGNING YOUR GARDEN

Planning and designing in advance will help you get the most out of your garden. When planning your garden, consider the following questions:

- ∞ How much garden space do you need? How much room do you have in your yard, and how much space do you need to leave for other activities? How wide of a path do you need between beds to tend the garden, mow the grass, or fit a wheel barrow? And most importantly, how much time do you have to dedicate to watering, weeding, and caring for your garden? Size your garden accordingly.
- ∞ Where will you put the garden? Choose a spot with the most mid-day sunlight. Remember, this may vary depending on the season. Avoid planting too close to other shrubs and trees, as their roots will grow into your garden and compete with your vegetables for nutrients. Also, be sure that the garden is close to your spigot for convenient watering.
- ∞ What will you grow? Consider the produce you normally buy, your favorite vegetables to eat, and the number of members in the household. Be sure to plant vegetables that are appropriate for the climate of the season. Refer to the planting calendar on page 13.

Square Foot Gardening Method

Square foot gardening is an easy method for beginner or experienced gardeners to grow bountiful harvests in small spaces. Some advantages of the square foot gardening method are:

- ∞ Requires less space for the same amount of crops than growing in rows.
- ∞ Conserve seeds by planting the exact number of vegetables you want, rather than overplanting.
- ∞ Encourages a variety of crops that rotate throughout the season.
- ∞ Plant coverage creates a living mulch, reducing weed pressure, retaining moisture, and keeping the soil healthy.

To try out this method, divide the raised bed into a grid of 1' x 1' squares. This can be done simply by drawing lines in the soil, or construct a permanent grid:

- ∞ On top of the raised bed, measure and mark the entire length and width of the box at 1 foot intervals.
- ∞ Hammer nails at each 1 foot marking.
- ∞ To make the square foot grid, attach string or twine to each nail and make a straight line to the nail across from it.

Depending on the mature size of the plant, grow 1, 4, 9 or 16 equally spaced plants per square foot. If you are unsure, consider how large you expect the final plant to grow.

Seed Packet Recommended Spacing	Plants Per Square Foot
12"	1
6"	4
4"	9
3"	16

Mix and match crop. In each 1'x1' square, you can plant:

1-4 Basil	4 Corn	4 Potatoes
8 Pole Beans w/ trellis	2 Cucumbers w/ trellis	1 Pepper
9 Bush Beans	1 Eggplant	16 Radishes
16 Beets	4 Garlic	9 Spinach
1 Broccoli	4 Kale	1 or 2 Squash w/ trellis
1 Cabbage	4 Lettuce	4 Strawberries
16 Carrots	1 Melon	4 Tomato, Bush
1 Cauliflower	2 Okra	1 Tomato, Vine
4 Celery	16 Onions	1 Watermelon
1 Collard	8 Peas w/ trellis	1 Zucchini w/ trellis

Harvest continually, and when a crop in one square is finished, add some compost and plant a different crop in that square. For more information about square foot gardening, read *Square Foot Gardening Method* by Mel Bartholomew, or check out www.squarefootgardening.org.

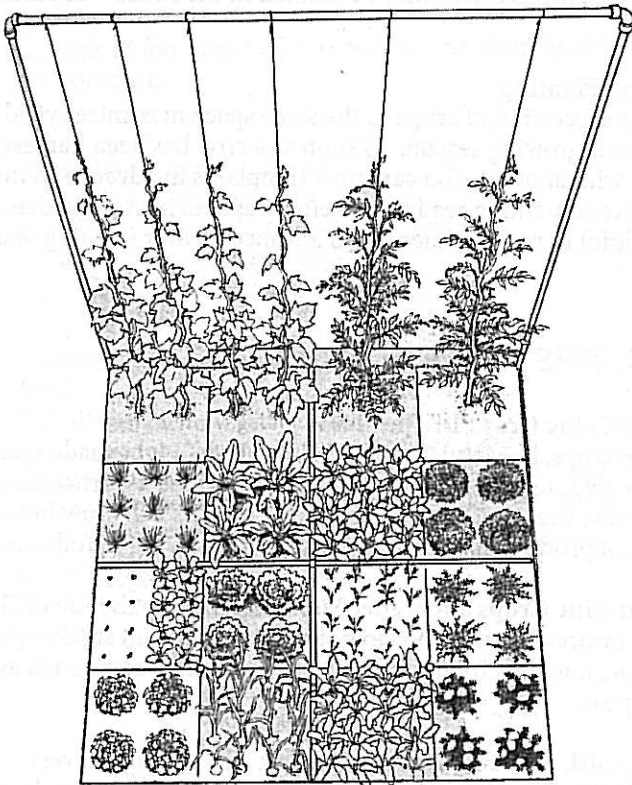
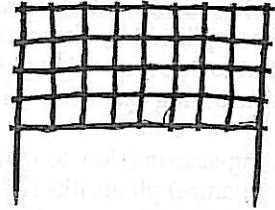
Using a Trellis

A trellis will increase your yield per square foot. It will also make it easier to monitor pests and to see and reach fruits for harvesting.

Any plant with creeping vines can be trained to grow on a trellis, including cucumbers, squash, zucchini, pumpkins, peas, beans and tomatoes. Plant seeds at the base of the trellis. When plants are large enough, wrap the vine around the trellis. The plants will continue to grow up the trellis on their own. Remember that a vertical planting will cast a shadow, so be

sure to situate the trellis on the north-facing side of the garden and take advantage of the shade by planting shade-tolerant crops near the vertical ones. Here are some ideas for creating your own low-cost, low-tech trellis:

- ∞ Trellis plants up pre-existing structures, such as walls or fences.
- ∞ Use branches or bamboo poles to construct a simple trellis. Drive thicker sticks deeply into the ground so that they will stay upright, then weave or tie thinner sticks in between to create a grid.
- ∞ Build a basic frame out of light wood, piping, or electrical conduit (see picture below). Then fill in the frame with strings, wire mesh, chicken wire, or hardware cloth.



rendering courtesy: *Square Foot Gardening Method* by Mel Bartholomew

Interplanting

Growing two or more types of vegetables in the same place at the same time is known as interplanting. Interplanting can help keep insect and disease problems under control. An interplanted garden should take into account: length of each plant's growth period, its growth pattern (tall, short, below or above ground), possible negative effects on other plants, preferred and nutrient and moisture requirements. Interplanting can be accomplished by alternating rows within a bed (plant a row of peppers next to a row of onions), by mixing plants within a row or square, or by distributing various species throughout the bed.

Long-season (slow to mature) plants like carrots and short-season (quick to mature) plants like radishes can be planted at the same time. The radishes are harvested before they begin to crowd the carrots. An example of combining growth patterns is planting smaller plants close to larger plants, radishes at the base of beans or broccoli. Shade tolerant species like lettuce, spinach and celery may be planted in the shadow of taller crops.

Succession Planting

Planting a succession of crops in the same space maximizes yield and extends your growing season. As soon as a crop has been harvested, replace it with another. You can grow transplants in advance so that you always have something ready to fill empty spaces in your garden. You may find it helpful to make a calendar in advance of your growing season.

IDEAS, TIPS AND CONSIDERATIONS

∞ Grow Some Crops In The Shade

Some crops, like lettuce, grow well in shade. Light shade is also a good place to grow perennial herbs. Beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, kohlrabi, peas, potatoes, rhubarb and turnips will grow in light shade but not produce as large a crop as plants growing in full sun.

∞ Plant Vine Crops and Taller Plants on the North Side of Garden

This insures larger plants do not cast a shadow on smaller plants. A simple, low-tech trellis will help grow vine-like crops such as beans and peas.

∞ Refurbish Soil and Replant Quickly After Each Harvest

Replenish the soil with organic matter each time you replant. When planting seedlings, put a handful of compost into each hole, giving plants an extra, lasting boost of nutrients. Refer to the section on Soil Fertility for more details.

∞ **Plant Frost Hardy Vegetables In Winter**

Some vegetables actually taste better after a frost, including kale, collards, broccoli, cabbage, parsnips, carrots and brussels sprouts.

∞ **Plant Crops That Repel Pests**

Garlic, chives, onions, coriander and anise will repel aphids and mites. Nasturtium and marigold will repel squash bugs, whiteflies, beetles, nematodes, potato beetles, cabbage moths and armyworms. Check out the book *1001 All-Natural Secrets to a Pest-Free Property* by Dr. Myles H. Bader for other great tips for fighting pests with natural solutions.

∞ **Direct Seed Some Crops**

Plant seeds of crops like carrots, radish, parsnips, beets, beans and peas directly into your garden.

∞ **Companion Plant**

Some plants assist each other to grow well, repel pests and repel weeds while other plant mixes deter healthy growth.

- Plant nasturtiums, onions, garlic and chives next to brassicas (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale) to repel aphids.
- Brassicas do well with aromatic herbs, potatoes, beets and onions. Never plant brassicas with tomatoes, pole beans or strawberries.
- Beets grow well near bush beans, onions or kohlrabi but are turned off by pole beans and mustard greens.
- Carrots grow well with tomatoes, lettuce, chives, onions, leeks, radish, rosemary and sage.
- Tomatoes grow well with basil, chives, onions, carrots, parsley, marigold and nasturtium. Tomatoes do not like potato, kohlrabi, fennel or cabbage.
- For more information about companion planting, read *Carrots Love Tomatoes: Secrets of Companion Planting for Successful Gardening* by Louise Riotte.

Perennial vs. Annual

Annual plants live for only one growing season. Their life cycle begins with the germination (sprouting) of the seed followed by the production of flowers, fruits and seeds. The plant dies after fruits or flowers are harvested. Re-sow the seeds that come from annual plants. Annuals include lettuce, broccoli, collard greens, tomatoes and peppers.

Perennial plants will grow and live for more than two years. Perennials grow and bloom, then some die back every autumn and winter and return in the spring from their root-stock. Deciduous perennials shed their leaves seasonally and put on new growth in the spring. Some perennials like rosemary are hardy year round.

Edible Perennial Herbs suitable for our area:

Cranberry Hibiscus	Spearmint and Peppermint	Lemon Verbena
Anise	Tumeric	Tarragon
Lemongrass	Ginger	Oregano
African Blue Basil	Cilantro	Rosemary
Chives	Sage	Stevia
Thyme		

Edible perennial vegetables suitable for our area:

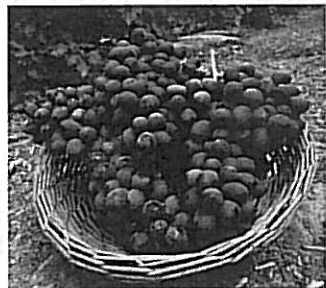
Arrowroot	Okinawa Spinach	Multiplier Onions
Katuk	Sunchoke	Watercress
Chicory	Nopale Cactus	Winged Bean
Chaya or Spinach Tree	Yuca Cassava	Sorrel
Moringa		

Fruiting edible perennial trees suitable for our area:

Mulberry	Pomegranate	Loquat or Japanese Plum
Fig	Low Chill Peaches	Pecan
Avocado (cold tolerant varieties)	Citrus (cold tolerant varieties)	Banana & Plantain (cold tolerant/short season varieties)
Improved Flawoods or Chickasaw Plum	Pinapple & Strawberry Guava	Thornless Blackberry
Muscadine Grape	Black Walnut	

Native edible perennials

In North Central Florida, there are a number of native (wild) fruit and nut bearing trees including wild persimmon, mulberry, blueberry, plums and walnut.



PLANTING

Seedlings

Seedlings are young plants. You can grow them yourself, or buy them from hardware or garden stores, farmer's markets and groceries. They can be purchased with food stamps. Here are some of the advantages of planting seedlings in your garden:

- ∞ Earlier fruit production and harvest.
- ∞ Seedlings get a competitive advantage against weeds.
- ∞ Produce seedlings when you want and in the quantity needed.
- ∞ Control seedling growth and assure high quality, vigorous plants.
- ∞ Many crops, like tomatoes, perform better when planted as a seedling.
- ∞ Transplants fill up a bed faster, which makes for less weeding and more efficient use of water.
- ∞ Spacing plants is easier when you use seedlings.

When planting seedlings, you run the risk of introducing pests to your garden. Many conventional seedlings are also sprayed with pesticides and herbicides. Purchase organic seedlings whenever possible.

Vegetables to Transplant from Seedlings

Become familiar with vegetables that can be planted as a seedling and those that should be directly seeded.

TABLE 1. Common vegetable seedling for starting a home garden

Broccoli	Chard	Kohlrabi	Squash
Brussels sprouts	Collards	Leek	Tomato
Cabbage	Cucumber	Lettuce	Turnips
Cantaloupe	Endive	Onion	Watermelon
Cauliflower	Eggplant	Mustard	
Celery	Kale	Pepper	

Growing Seedlings

Transplants can be grown in various containers, including pots, seed trays or a seedbed, which are available at gardening stores. You can make your own growing containers out of recycled yogurt cups, egg cartons, or any small wooden or plastic containers. Containers should be small, light, and easy to handle. Make sure your containers have small holes or cracks in the bottom so that excess water can drain out.

Use a multipurpose organic soil or experiment with mixing your own potting mix by combining garden soil, sand and compost to start seeds. After filling the container with soil mix, lightly firm it so it is less likely to become compacted when watered. Plant seeds shallowly, then cover with a light dusting of more soil mix. Keep seedlings in a sunny place and water daily. Cold-sensitive crops can be kept indoors before the first frost if placed near a sunny window. That way, you'll have seedlings ready to go as soon as spring sets in.

Transplanting

Most vegetables are ready to be transplanted into the garden 4-6 weeks after sowing. Transplant when they have at least two fully developed leaves. Make sure to plant seedlings that are strong and free of pests and diseases. If possible, transplant seedlings when the weather is not too hot and the conditions are best (e.g. early morning or late afternoon and before or after rain).

To successfully transplant vegetable seedlings:

- ∞ Loosen soil in the planting area.
- ∞ Make a hole with a hand trowel or hand-dig. The hole should be about an inch deeper than the length of the plant's roots.
- ∞ Gently squeeze the plant out of the container and pull up by the stem.
- ∞ Place the plant in the hole so that the base of the stem is level with the soil and sprinkle around its roots until the hole is full.
- ∞ When the hole is filled with soil, press the soil lightly around the base of the plant.
- ∞ Gently water around the transplant. Make sure the spray of your hose is not strong enough to knock over the plant.

Direct Seeding

These crops thrive best when seeded directly into the garden: carrot, beet, radish, parsnip, corn, zucchini squash, peas, beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, watermelon and melon.

Crop Rotation

One way to give your vegetables a better chance of competing against weeds, pests and diseases is to use a crop rotation plan. Avoid planting the same crop families in the same location every season. Draw a map and use a calendar to keep track.

Why practice crop rotation? Because vegetables in the same family often share the same pest and disease problems. When you rotate crops, you deny pests and diseases the plants they need to survive. For example, if your potatoes come up full of scars, you have potato scab, an organism that lives in the soil. If you plant a different family of vegetable in that location next season, the organism will die off because it won't have any potatoes to eat. In a year or two, you can plant potatoes in the same spot again.

TABLE 4. Vegetable Families

Beetroot Family	Cucurbit Family	Brassicacae
Beets	Cucumber	Broccoli
Spinach	Melon	Brussels Sprouts
Swiss Chard	Pumpkin	Cabbage
	Squash	Cauliflower
Solanaceae Family		Collards
Pepper	Legume/Pea Family	Kale
Potato	Broad Bean	Kohlrabi
Tomato	Snap Bean	Mustard
Eggplant	Pea	Radish
		Turnip
Carrot Family	Onion Family	
Carrot	Garlic	
Celery	Leek	
Fennel	Onion	
Parsley	Shallot	

PLANTING SCHEDULE

Month	Crops to Plant
January	beet, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, kale, mustard, pea, potato, radish, turnip
February	beet, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, celery, chard, Chinese cabbage, collard, cucumber, eggplant, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard green, pea, potato, radish, turnip, tomato
March	bean, beet, black-eyed pea, cantaloupe, carrot, celery, chard, collar, corn, cucumber, eggplant, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard green, okra, pea, pepper, potato, pumpkin, radish, summer squash, sweet potato, winter squash, watermelon
April	bean, black-eyed pea, cantaloupe, collard, corn, cucumber, eggplant, kohlrabi, mustard green, okra, pepper, pumpkin, summer squash, sweet potato, tomato, turnip, watermelon
May	black-eyed pea, eggplant, mustard green, okra, sweet potato
June	black-eyed pea, eggplant, okra, sweet potato
July	black-eyed pea, eggplant, okra, pepper, watermelon
August	bean, broccoli, black-eyed pea, cauliflower, collard, corn, cucumber, pepper, pumpkin, summer squash, turnip, winter squash, watermelon
September	bean, beet, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, collard, cucumber, kale, lettuce, mustard green, onion, radish, summer squash, turnip
October	beet, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, chard, Chinese cabbage, collard, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, onion, radish, spinach, strawberry, turnip
November	beet, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, chard, Chinese cabbage, collard, kale, kohlrabi, mustard green, onion, radish, spinach, strawberry
December	beet, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, chard, Chinese cabbage, kale, kohlrabi, mustard green, radish

CROPS FOR NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA

FALL, WINTER AND SPRING CROPS

Beets

Planting Dates: October-March

Plants per Square Foot: 9-16

Spacing: 3-5 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ - 1 inch

Hardiness: Tolerant of frosts but damaged by freezes

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full Sun or Part Shade

Companion Plants: bush bean, cabbage family, lettuce, onion

Anti-Companions: pole bean and beets stunt each other's growth

Harvest: 50-65 days; Harvest beet greens and prepare like spinach. Harvest when roots are 1-2 inches in diameter. Beets larger than 3 inches in diameter become woody and tough.

Major Pests: caterpillars and stem rot

Considerations: Grow beets only from seed. Water generously at seeding.

The best color and flavor develop under cool conditions and bright sun.

Cover plants with loose hay, leaves, or other mulch when temperatures are expected to drop below 30 degrees F.

Broccoli

Planting Dates: August-January

Plants per Square Foot: 1

Spacing: 12-18 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ - 1 inch

Hardiness: Tolerant of weather down to 25 degrees F, but not severe freezes

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full to part sun

Companion Plants: beets, aromatic plants, (dill, sage, rosemary) onions, oregano, potatoes.

Anti-Companions: pole beans, strawberries and tomatoes.

Harvest: 60-90 days; Cut large flower heads from tops of plants before green buds open to yellow blooms. Allow plants to continue growing and side shoots will develop into small heads.

Major Pests: caterpillars, aphids

Considerations: Broccoli does not tolerate hot weather

Cabbage

Planting Dates: September-February

Plants per Square Foot: 1

Spacing: 8-12 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ - 1 inch

Hardiness: Tolerant of frosts and light freezes

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full sun

Companion Plants: Strong scented herbs, basil, beets, beans, chamomile, celery, chard, dill, garlic, hyssop, lettuce, marigold, mint, nasturtium, onion, rosemary, sage, spinach, thyme, tomato.

Anti-Companions: strawberry, grapes, rue

Harvest: 70-100 days

Major Pests: caterpillars

Carrot

Planting Dates: September-March

Plants per Square Foot: 16

Spacing: 1-3 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ inch

Hardiness: Tolerates frosts and light freezes

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full Sun; Tolerates light shade, but won't produce as well.

Companion Plants: beans, chive, delphinium, pea, lettuce, pepper, radish, rosemary, onion, sage, tomato

Anti-Companions: dill

Harvest: 65-80 days; When about finger size, baby carrots can be thinned and eaten fresh. Harvest remaining crop when roots are less than 1 ½ inched in diameter. Larger carrots tend to be tough.

Major Pests: caterpillars, leaf hoppers

Considerations: Grow only from seed. Carrots need deep, well drained soil to grow best. Carrots will grow sweeter and be less fibrous in soil that remains moist. Carrots need lots of potassium. Lightly sprinkle wood ashes over the planting area before you sow the seeds. This will add the right amount of potassium for you crops. Carrots can be seeded densely, then thinned to appropriate spacing. Make sure the carrot roots stay completely covered with soil to prevent green tops and bitter carrots.

Cauliflower

Planting Dates: October-February

Plants per Square Foot: 1

Spacing: 18-24 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ - 1 inch

Hardiness: Tolerant of frosts

Sun/Shade Requirements: Requires Full Sun

Cauliflower, continued

Companion Plants: basil, bean, garlic, hyssop, lettuce, marigold, mint, onion, rosemary, sage, thyme

Anti-Companions: grapes and rue

Harvest: Usually 60-90 days; Cauliflower forms a head in the center of the plant. Cut when compact and pure white.

Major Pests: caterpillars, cutworms, cabbage loopers, aphids

Considerations: An even moisture supply is needed for transplants to become established and to produce good heads. Flavor improves and becomes sweeter with cooler temperatures. Excessive heat can damage the quality of cauliflower. When heads are 2-3" diameter, tie leaves around it to prevent discoloration.

Celery

Planting Dates: September-February

Plants per Square Foot: 4

Spacing: 9-12 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ¼" - ½ inch

Hardiness: Tolerant of frosts and light freezes

Sun/Shade Requirements: Sun to Part Shade

Companion Plants: bean, cabbage family, tomato

Harvest: Cut stalks and leaves as needed in soups and salads. Cutting (or Leaf) Celery will continue to grow until mid-summer.

Major Pests: caterpillars, leaf hoppers

Considerations: Water generously when seeding. Cutting or Leaf celery is a long living variety of celery that is very easy and rewarding to grow in this climate.

Chard

Planting Dates: October-March

Plants per Square Foot: 4

Spacing: 4-5 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ - 1 inch

Hardiness: Survives light frost; will bolt in freezing temperatures

Sun/Shade Requirements: Prefers full sun early/part shade when it's warm

Companion Plants: bean, onion, cabbage family, French marigold

Harvest: Begin harvesting when leaves reach usable size (8-12 inches long.) Remove a leaf or two from each plant, or cut plants an inch or two above the soil for cut-and-come-again harvest.

Major Pests: leaf miners, aphids

Considerations: As plants age, older leaves get tough. Cut plants back to about 3-5 inches tall to encourage a flush of new, tender growth.

Collards

Planting Dates: August-February

Plants per Square Foot: 1

Spacing: 10-18 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ - 1 inch

Hardiness: Tolerant of frost and light-medium freezes up to 18 degrees F.

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full sun or part shade

Companion Plants: basil, bean, cucumber, dill, garlic, hyssop, lettuce, marigold, mint, nasturtium, onion, potato, radish, rosemary, sage, thyme

Anti-companions: grapes, rue, tansy

Harvest: 70-90 days; Harvest leaves when they are up to 10 inches long, dark green, and still young. Old leaves may be tough or stringy. Pick the lower leaves first, working your way up the plant.

Major Pests: caterpillars, aphids

Recommended Plants per Person: 8-10

Considerations: While collards are more heat-tolerant than other brassicas, their flavor is best after a frost or period of cold weather

Kale

Planting Dates: October-February

Plants per Square Foot: 4

Spacing: 8-16 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ¼ - ½ inch

Hardiness: Tolerant of frosts and light-medium freezes

Sun/Shade Requirements: part-full sun

Companion Plants: beets, aromatic plants, (dill, sage, rosemary), onions, oregano, potatoes.

Harvest: Ready to harvest when leaves reach usable size; usually 50-60 days; Can harvest or thin baby kale as needed.

Major Pests: caterpillars, cutworms, aphids

Considerations: Good crop for intensive planting

Lettuce

Planting Dates: September-February

Plants per Square Foot: 4

Spacing: 8-12 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ inch

Hardiness: Tolerant of frosts and light freezes up to 20 degrees F.

Sun/Shade Requirements: prefers part-shade; Avoid full blast of sun in the middle of the day, which will cause lettuce to bolt.

Companion Plants: carrot, radish, strawberry, cucumber, carrots, celery, onions.

Harvest: Harvest leaf lettuce by cutting the individual leaves when needed or harvest whole head when plant reaches maturity. Or, densely plant a

Lettuce, continued

mixture of lettuces and trim sections as needed. Trimmed lettuce will grow back three to four times. Lettuce plants will reach full maturity within 40-90 days.

Major Pests: aphids, green loopers, leafhopper, snails and slugs.

Considerations: Lettuce may turn bitter and/or bolt if left in the ground past maturity or if weather is too hot or dry.

Onions

Planting Dates: September-December

Plants per Square Foot: 16

Spacing: 4-6 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ inch

Hardiness: Tolerant of frosts and light freezes

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full Sun

Companion Plants: Onions repel cabbage moth, aphids, weevils, carrot flies, spider mites, moles and some nematodes in soil. Plant with beets, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, celery, chamomile, collard, cucumber, dill, kale, lettuce, pepper, potato, radish, rose, savory, squash, strawberry, tomato

Anti-Companions: beans, peas, rue, sage

Harvest: Usually 110-150 days; harvest young green stems as scallions.

Gather mature bulbs in late spring after tops fall over. To dry for storage, spread out bulbs in an airy location away from direct sun.

Major Pests: thrips, leaf spot

Considerations: Florida varieties of onions often do not store well. Keep them in a spot with low humidity to extend shelf life. Save extra bulbs to plant in fall.

Variations: Bunching onions, Leeks, Garlic, Chives, Shallots

Peas (Snap Peas)

Planting Dates: September-January

Plants per Square Foot: 8-16, with trellis

Spacing: 2-3 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: 1-2 inches

Hardiness: Tolerant of frosts and light freezes

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full Sun

Companion Plants: carrots, cucumbers, corn, turnips, radishes, beans, potatoes and aromatic herbs

Anti-Companions: onions, garlic, leek, and shallots

Harvest: Usually 70-90 days after sowing; Harvest when pods are filled out and peas inside are full size.

Major Pests: aphids

Considerations: Grow from seed and train up a trellis or fence. Snap peas

Peas, continued

become sweeter as pods fatten. Shelling isn't necessary since pods and peas are eaten together. Flowers are also edible.

Radish

Planting Dates: September-March

Plants per Square Foot: 16

Spacing: 1-2 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ - ¾ inch

Hardiness: Tolerant of frost and light freezes

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full to Part Sun

Companion Plants: repels cucumber beetles; English pea, lettuce, cucumber, beets, carrots, spinach, beans

Anti-Companions: Hyssop, cabbage, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, broccoli, kohlrabi, turnips

Harvest: 25-30 days; Radishes mature quickly.

Major Pests: aphids

Considerations: Grow only from seed. Radishes need consistent moisture throughout development. If the soil dries out during their growth, the radish fruit will become bitter and mealy tasting. If radishes are grown in too much heat with sporadic watering, they will become spicy and tough.

Spinach

Planting Dates: October-November

Plants per Square Foot: 4

Spacing: 3-5 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ¾ inch

Hardiness: Tolerant of frosts and light freezes

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full sun to part shade

Companion Plants: Cabbage family, strawberry

Harvest: Usually 45-60 days; Begin to harvest when leaves are 3-4 inches.

Cut individual leaves for a cut-and-come-again harvest.

Major Pests: caterpillars

Considerations: Plant from seed. Will bolt and go to seed quickly if weather is too hot or dry.

SUMMER CROPS

Cucumber

Planting Dates: August-September or February-April

Plants per Square Foot: 2 w/ a trellis

Spacing: 12-24 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: 1-2 inches

Cucumber, continued

Hardiness: Tender, damaged by frost

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full Sun; can tolerate partial shade

Companion Plants: corn, beans, sunflowers, peas, beets, carrots, dill, nasturtium.

Anti-Companions: Sage; Avoid planting where onions have been planted

Harvest: 40-65 days; Harvest before fruit loses green color. Remove old large fruit to encourage new fruit growth. Harvest in morning before afternoon heat.

Major Pests: downy mildew, caterpillars, pickleworms

Considerations: Direct seeding is advised as cucumbers are difficult to transplant. Vines grow rapidly and need a lot of space to run. Can be trained to run vertically along wire cages and trellis, this allows for straighter, more uniform fruit.

Eggplant

Planting Dates: April-July

Plants per Square Foot: 1

Spacing: 12-24 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ inch

Hardiness: Tender and damaged by frost

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full sun

Companion Plants: bean, pepper, marigolds

Harvest: 75-110 days; harvest eggplants at 5 to 6 inches in length. A “ready to pick” eggplant is usually glossy in color. Dull-looking, spongy eggplants are often over mature and may contain dark, hard seeds resulting in a less tasty crop. Clip the plant from its stalk with a knife or scissor.

Major Pests: caterpillars, spider mites

Considerations: Eggplants need lots of moisture. May require a trellis.

Okra

Planting Dates: March-July

Plants per Square Foot: 2

Spacing: 6-12 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: 1-2 inches

Hardiness: Tender and damaged by frost

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full Sun

Companion Plants: pepper

Harvest: 50-75 days; Harvest when pods are young, 3-4 inches, 4-5 days after bloom opens. Pods will become tough if left. The more often okra is harvested, the better it will produce.

Major Pests: stinkbugs, caterpillars, nematodes, mites

Considerations: Soak seed overnight to hasten germination. Prune lanky growth or non-productive plants to 1-2 feet to allow new shoots to form.

Pepper

Planting Dates: March-August

Plants per Square Foot: 1

Spacing: 12-24 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: ½ inch

Hardiness: Tender and damaged by frost

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full sun

Companion Plants: carrot, eggplant, onion and tomato

Harvest: 70-100 days; lift fruit and snap from plant with a twisting motion.

Major Pests: aphids, caterpillars, pepper weevil

Considerations: Stake tall plants. Most sweet green peppers will turn bright red if you leave them on the plant longer and the vitamin C is greatly increased once they turn color. Many colored peppers will start out green. Most hot peppers are most powerful once they are in full color.

Summer Squash or Zucchini

Planting Dates: March-September

Plants per Square Foot: 1, with trellis

Spacing: 24-36 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: 1-2 inches

Hardiness: Tender and damaged by frost

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full Sun

Companion Plants: corn, melon, pumpkin

Harvest: 40-55 days; For sweet harvests, pick Zucchini and Yellow Squash varieties when immature (6-8 inches long). Will lose flavor if allowed to grow too large.

Major Pests: caterpillars, powdery mildew, vine borers

Considerations: Squash blossoms are edible and make a delicious addition to salads, soups and stirfry dishes. Preserve fruits by picking only male flowers (those without a fruit growing from them).

Tomato

Planting Dates: February-August

Plants per Square Foot: Bush varieties, 4. Vine varieties, 1 w/ trellis

Spacing: 10-24 inches between plants

Hardiness: Tender and damaged by frost

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full sun (at least 7 hours of direct sun)

Companion Plants: asparagus, carrot, celery, cucumber, onion, parsley, pepper, marigold, borage, chives, basil

Anti-Companions: corn, dill, kohlrabi, potatoes

Harvest: 75-100 days; For best flavor, pick when color has fully developed.

Major Pests: caterpillars, hornworms

Considerations: Transplant seedlings deeply, burying about 75% of the

Tomato, continued

plant all the way up to a few top leaves. Tomatoes are able to develop roots all along their stems. Grow plants upright, staked, or in cages. Keep soil moist, but not wet. Water the soil around the base of the plant and try to minimize watering the foliage. Pinch and remove suckers that develop in the crotch joint of two branches. They won't bear fruit and will take energy away from the rest of the plant.

Winter Squash

Planting Dates: June-August

Spacing: 36-48 inches between plants

Planting Depth for Seeds: 1-2 inches

Hardiness: Tender, damaged by frost

Sun/Shade Requirements: Full sun

Companion Plants: corn, melon, pumpkin

Harvest: Usually 80-100 days

Major Pests: caterpillars, downy mildew, powdery mildew, vine borers

Considerations: Varieties that produce well in this region include Seminole Pumpkin, Butternut, Spaghetti, and Acorn. These varieties need a lot of space to grow and will spread considerably. Plant on the perimeter of the raised bed and direct their growth outward. Consider trellising or training to grow up a fence.

WATERING

Water is one of the most vital ingredients to successful vegetable gardening. From the moment a seed or transplant is planted, its survival depends on receiving adequate water from either rainfall or irrigation. If the soil dries out too much, the plants will quickly shrivel and die. Water can be adequately delivered to plants using a variety of methods including hand watering, sprinklers, soaker hoses or drip irrigation.

Watering Tips

- ∞ To adequately thrive, all small seeds, seedlings and transplants must receive water daily.
- ∞ Thoroughly saturate soil so water percolates down and soaks root zones. Avoid wetting just the soil surface.
- ∞ The best time to water is between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. Do not water in the middle of the day, especially during the hot season.
- ∞ Water when the top 1/2 inch of soil begins to dry out.

- ∞ Check the garden frequently for drooping leaves or other signs of stressed plants.
- ∞ Avoid over watering. Do not allow the soil to be continually saturated.
- ∞ Water the soil, not the plant foliage. Wet foliage may lead to disease, especially on warm season crops like tomato and squash.
- ∞ Water after fertilizing.
- ∞ Use mulch around plants to protect the soil and stretch time between waterings.
- ∞ If you hand water with a hose or bucket, be sure the pressure is not so high that it disturbs the soil structure or roots. A hose nozzle or sprayer helps to evenly distribute the water over a greater area than just sticking a finger over the end of the hose.

SOIL CARE AND NUTRIENTS

Vocabulary for soil care:

- ∞ **Organic matter:** Organic matter is an umbrella term for all biodegradable living or once-living matter and includes plant clippings, mulch, kitchen scraps, compost, and manure. Micro-organisms break down organic matter into simpler compounds, which become available to plants as nutrients.
- ∞ **Compost:** Compost is made from decomposed organic matter. Unlike fertilizer, it does not necessarily have high nutrient content. However, it helps plants grow by improving soil health, which means soil will better retain nutrients. For more information on compost, see page 25
- ∞ **Fertilizer:** Fertilizer is a soil amendment that adds specific nutrients necessary for plant growth. Chemical fertilizers, while adding nutrients, can actually deplete the quality of the soil. Organic fertilizers are made from natural materials.

Importance of Nutrients

Most plants grow by absorbing nutrients from the soil. Plants require more or less of certain nutrients to grow and produce well. An ideal soil contains equivalent portions of sand, silt, clay and organic matter. The makeup of a soil (soil texture) and its acidity (pH) determine the extent to which nutrients are available to plants. Soils in Alachua County are generally sandy and low in organic matter. Therefore, they need abundant sources of organic soil amendments and fertilizer to produce vegetables. The best way to maintain or restore the nutrients in your garden's soil is to apply nutrient sources (i.e. fertilizers).

Due to the slow release of nutrients in the fertile soil mix provided to you, your GIFT Garden will produce abundant vegetables in the first and perhaps even the second season with very little soil amendment and fertilization. Eventually you will need to amend the soil with compost, other soil amendments and organic fertilizer.

Soil Care Tips

- ∞ Exposed soil quickly dries out in the sun, zapping nutrients and killing micro-organismic populations that keeps soil healthy. Keep soil covered with plants or, in the off season, with mulch.
- ∞ Soil settles over time, so regular additions of organic matter will maintain soil depth in the bed. Using organic compost, fertilizer and mulch all year will feed and replenish the soil on an ongoing basis.
- ∞ Top dress soil in beds with organic matter in spring and fall to improve the soil. Use peat moss, manure compost or homemade compost.
- ∞ After harvest, chopped vegetable matter, leaves and grass clippings can be spread over the beds and spaded in 8 to 12 inches deep.
- ∞ Sidedress the crops with organic fertilizer during the growing season based on needs of individual crops.
- ∞ Overfertilizing leads to poor production. If leaves are curling upwards or look burned, you may be using too much fertilizer.

Types of Organic Fertilizer

Animal manures	Good nutrient source and full of microorganisms. Should be well-aged or composted before applying directly to the garden.
Blood meal	Slow release source of nitrogen plus trace minerals. Apply just before planting and use sparingly.
Fish meal/emulsion	Source of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and trace elements. Releases quickly.
Greensand	Rich in potassium and numerous micronutrients. Can be used to loosen clay soils. Apply 5-10 lbs. per 100 square feet.
Shellfish meal	Strong source of calcium (23%), nitrogen, phosphorus and micronutrients. May also be used to inhibit root-knot nematodes.
Rock phosphate	Great for flowering plants and provides a 10-year phosphate reserve.

Source: A Growers Guide to Fertilizer by Eric Vinje, Planet Natural

Choosing the Right Fertilizer

Desired Effect	Fertilizer
Promote large blooms and fruits	Bat guano
Condition soil	Compost Animal manures
Promote sturdy above-ground plant growth	Blood meal Fish emulsion
Promote root growth in transplants and seedlings	Phosphate rock Worm castings Bone meal
Enhance composting process	Alfalfa meal Blood meal
Bind sandy soil	Colloidal rock phosphate
Loosen clay soil	Greensand Coconut coir

Source: A Growers Guide to Fertilizer by Eric Vinje, Planet Natural

Which Vegetables Need the Most Fertilizer?

- ∞ **Light Feeding Vegetables:** bean, beet, carrot, onion, pea, potato, radish, turnip
- ∞ **Heavy Feeding Vegetables:** broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, corn, cucumber, kale, leeks, lettuce, melon, peppers, pumpkin, spinach, squash, tomato

Nutrients from most organic sources become available slowly over time. By the time your plants have problems, it is challenging to quickly correct the deficiency. Therefore, it is wise to apply organic fertilizers well before planting so adequate nutrient amounts will be released when plants need them. Soil moisture, temperature and pH also effect nutrient availability.

Compost

One of the best ways an organic gardener can build and maintain their soil fertility is by making compost an adding it to the garden. Compost is a vital element in organic gardening, providing food for plants and living organisms in the soil.

The key to making compost is to thoroughly mix “brown” carbon-rich material with “green” nitrogen-rich materials. Green materials include vegetable food scraps, coffee grounds, grass clippings, plant cuttings, and manure. Brown materials include woody plant matter, dead leaves, egg shells, sawdust, straw, and paper. Your compost should contain at least twice as much brown as green matter. Meat scraps and animal fats should be avoided unless the compost pile is very hot. Similarly, manures from horses, cows and chickens are best added to hot compost piles, but could also be added in smaller amounts to ‘cooler’ compost piles, especially if they are given a long time to breakdown and are added to the garden soil with care not to cover the edible parts of vegetables. Sprinkling some soil throughout the different layers of the compost pile is a good way to introduce decomposing organisms like bacteria and fungi into the mixture.

Compost is ready for the garden when it has a rich texture and resembles dark soil. It should smell earthy, not foul, and you should not see any large chunks of un-decomposed matter.

You compost pile should be very warm because micro-organisms release heat as they decompose organic matter. If the pile is cool, matter will decompose very slowly. Stirring the compost occasionally provides oxygen to micro-organisms. If the pile smells foul, add more “browns.”

Making Homemade Compost Bins from Wooden Pallets

Materials:

4 Square Sturdy Wood Pallets (untreated)

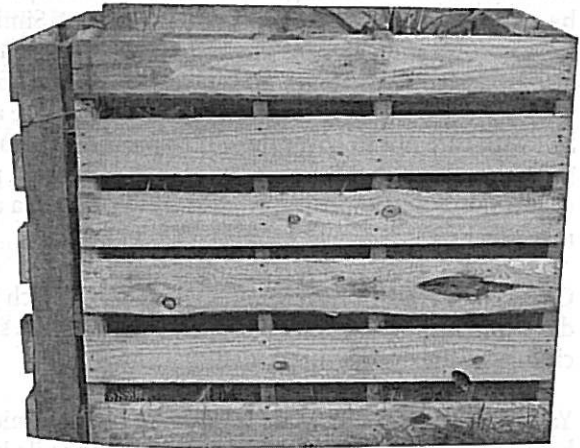
8 10" Wire Strips for tying corners (or Zip Ties)

Hard Rake to level ground

Level

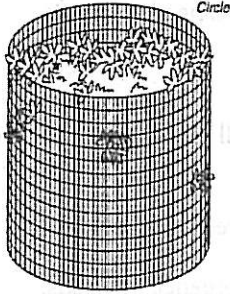
Locate a 4'x4' space where compost box will be placed. Rake location, clearing sticks and obstacles as well as leveling the land where the pallets will touch the ground. Raking toward the center of the 4'x4' space creates a pile of debris that can be left within the created box; the beginnings of the compost. With the edges of the 4'x4' space clear of debris and level, place one pallet on end into position as one side of the box. Have the more heavily boarded side of the pallet on the outside of the box; this looks better and more air will circulate within the box this way. Take a second pallet (same side out) and butt it up to the first pallet. Use the level to get a 90 degree angle and a level top edge. Wrap wire around the corner near the top and near the bottom to hold pallets in place. Repeat with the third and fourth pallets until there is a box with a level top and an appealing outside appearance.

This box will accommodate a lot of debris and is great for yard waste as well as kitchen scraps. Construct two. When the first box is full the second box can be used. While the second box is filling up the first is breaking down. By the time the second box is full the first box should decomposed into great compost. When the compost is ready, clip the wires, drop the sides, pull away the pallets and harvest the compost for use in your garden. The nice thing about this method is that it is passive. No turning or shoveling, just waiting.



Source: John Jeavons, *How to Grow More Vegetables*

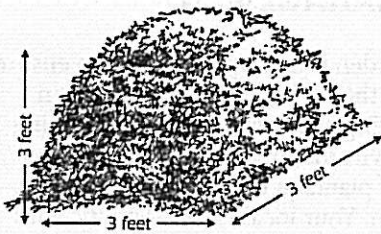
Other Composting Systems



A wire compost bin is inexpensive and easily constructed. It is also easy to relocate.

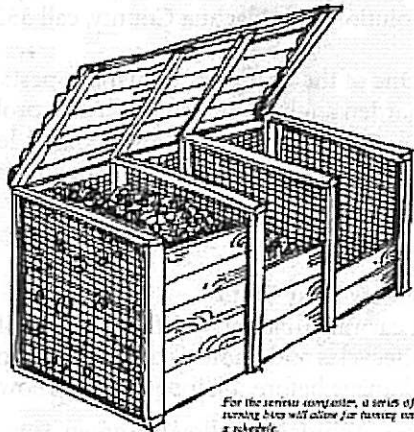
Plastic compost bins are compact, waterproof, and great for apartment dwellers.

Commercially available bins have a door at the bottom for easy access to finished material. Or, simply use a trash can. Mix compost by turning the can on its side and rolling around on the ground.



The simplest compost method is to pile the materials on the ground, taking a few minutes to loosen the soil on the ground with a digging fork.

A two or three bin system makes composting very efficient, as a finished pile can be used on the garden while the other one or two are decomposing.



For the serious composters, a series of turning bins will allow for turning on a schedule.

WEED CONTROL

Weed control is easy in raised bed gardens. There is no need to use an herbicide to control weeds!

Weed Control Tips:

- ∞ Monitor your garden regularly for weeds and pull them while they are small.
- ∞ Hand pull weeds from loose soil.
- ∞ Excavate and dispose of the entire root of each weed so they do not grow back.
- ∞ Plant vegetables close together to reduce the emergence of weeds.
- ∞ Mulch with wood waste, oak leaves, pine needles, or hay to prevent weeds from growing.
- ∞ Use cardboard in pathways to smother weeds and apply mulch.
- ∞ Many common “weeds” are actually edible or medicinal wild plants. Try to identify your weeds and see if they might be worth keeping around!

ORGANIC PEST MANAGEMENT

Avoiding chemical pesticides in your garden is an important step to ensure the health and safety of people, pets and the earth. Pest management in organic gardens is best achieved by creating a fertile, biologically thriving soil, by planting crops adapted to our environment and resistant to pests and disease, and by mixing a diversity of plants in the garden. Managing pests takes patience and experimentation. Your local Extension office has staff members who can help identify garden pests and provide organic solutions. In Alachua County, call 352.955-0122.

One of the best ways to manage pests is to pay careful attention to your garden so that you can catch pest problems before they get out of control. If you see brown or yellow spots on leaves, it might mean pests have been sucking juices out of them. Tiny holes in your leaves are a tell-tale sign of a pest problem.

Know Your Pests

Learning to identify different types of pests, and understanding their lifecycles and habits is a smart gardening strategy for preventing pest damage before it happens. The following insects are common in Florida:

- ∞ Aphids are yellowish-green, tiny insects that can be found clustered on

tender plant shoots, generally on the underside of leaves. They stunt a plant's growth by sucking its juices, causing leaves to curl.

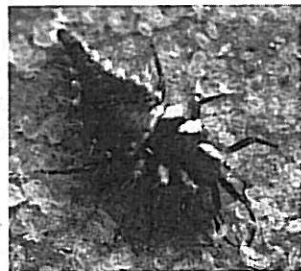
- ☞ Spider mites are common pests, very tiny and often white or red. Some have two spots on their back. They generally move fast and when in large numbers build visible webbing. Spider mites can cause discoloration and in extreme cases deform your vegetable leaves.
- ☞ Whiteflies (right) are hard to see because the adults are constantly flying around the plants and the young ones are too tiny to easily recognize. Whiteflies are common in tomatoes, squash, melons and other vegetables. They feed by sucking on the leaf juices and can transmit diseases.



Beneficial insects

Some insects actually eat those that feed on your plants. Become familiar with the beneficial insects in the garden. Beneficial insects, just like pests, come in different shapes, colors and sizes. It is important to avoid using pesticides so that this beneficial insects can help control pest populations in your garden.

- ☞ Ladybugs feed on aphids, whitefly larvae and other soft body pests.
- ☞ Parasitic wasps are tiny black wasps that attack aphids and are common in many places in Florida. These wasps can lay 100 eggs during their 4-5 day lifespan. A female parasitic wasp will lay one egg per aphid, immobilizing it and eventually killing it. The infected aphids become rigid, brown and unable to move. From the aphids, new wasps will emerge, to continue the cycle. It takes about 14 days for a new wasp to hatch.
- ☞ Lacewings (right) are generalist predators, because they eat different types of pests including aphids. An individual lacewing can eat between 100 and 600 aphids. Lacewings can control aphids that attack pepper, potato, tomato and eggplant.



Recommendations

- ∞ Know the pests that live in and around your garden.
- ∞ Know your beneficial insects.
- ∞ Weather variations from season to season may cause a particular management practice to be effective one year and ineffective the next. Observe closely and take good notes.
- ∞ Pest and beneficial insects are associated with both perennial and annual crops. Find out what types of crops pests prefer.
- ∞ Inspect weeds adjacent to and in your garden regularly to make sure they do not harbor destructive pests.

Home Remedies to Discourage Common Garden Pests

Cats: Save your citrus peels, especially orange, and cut it up or run over a pile with the lawnmower. Scatter it around the garden and its edges. Cats thoroughly dislike citrus!

Deer: The best way to keep deer out of a garden is to use a fence that is at least 6 feet high. Deer don't like the smell of fish products, kelp, soap or hot peppers. Any spray made from these products can be used. Just mix the product of choice in water and spray the plants to be protected.

Spider Mites: Natural predatory mites are the best control, so having compost and mulch to encourage beneficial mites will keep the right balance. Spiders, parasitic wasps, lady bugs and lacewings also feed on red spider mites. Spray plants with soap spray weekly until mites are gone, then monthly to stop them from returning.

Whitefly: Windy conditions keep whitefly away temporarily, and also a strong hose down will move them on. Use a vegetable-based detergent spray (see recipe below) Spray on infected plants, including underside of leaves if possible. Whitefly are also attracted to yellow, so try hanging anything bright yellow coated in a sticky substance to trap them.

Caterpillars: Spray with a molasses blend or vinegar spray (see recipes below) to discourage moths and grubs on corn, fruit and brassicas (includes broccoli, spinach, cabbage, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, kale, collard greens, pak choi and kohlrabi). Spray the leaves, top and bottom, about once a week.

Aphids: Tea brewed from rhubarb leaves poisons smaller critters, such as aphids, mites, white fly, caterpillars, etc. Pour boiling water over crushed rhubarb leaves then soak for several days. Strain, add a good squirt of detergent and dilute until it looks like weak tea and spray over pest-infested plants. Repeat every 10 days or so.

Natural Pest Control Tips

- ☞ Identify garden pests and determine that their activity is in fact a problem (some level of pest infestation often does not affect a crop) before trying to find a remedy!
- ☞ Plant varieties of vegetables that are locally adapted and pest resistant.
- ☞ Handpick and kill bigger bugs; use a stream of water to wash away tiny bugs from your plant's leaves and stems.
- ☞ Many pests, like whitefly, are attracted to yellow. Trap insects by hanging yellow paper plates covered in a sticky substance, such as Vaseline.
- ☞ Use physical traps and barriers, like cutworm collars (a collar wrapped around seedling stems) and mice traps.
- ☞ Attract beneficial pest predators to your garden by mulching and by planting a diversity of plants in your landscape. Bat houses and bird baths will also attract pest predators.
- ☞ Many pests are repelled by soapy water. Spray on vegetable leaves or apply with a sponge.
- ☞ Practice clean cultivation. Remove all weeds, debris, and harvest wastes from the garden area and promptly compost them.
- ☞ Rotate crops.
- ☞ Companion plant.
- ☞ Floating row covers, available at garden stores, provide a physical barrier against pests while allowing sunlight, air, and water through.
- ☞ Laying a reflective mulch, such as aluminum foil, will repel aphids and whiteflies.
- ☞ Pesticides from the store, even those labeled "organic," should only be used as a last resort. Even organic pesticides will wipe out populations of pollinating insects and beneficial predators, which may aggravate your pest problem in the long run.

Companion Planting for Pest Control

ants — spearmint, tansy, pennyroyal
bean leaf beetle — onion, turnip, potato
codling moth— common oleander
flea beetle— onion, mint, garlic
harlequin bug — turnips, onion, radish
Japanese beetle — garlic, larkspur, red buckeye
Mexican bean beetle — potato, garlic, radish, onion
root-knot nematodes — French marigold
spider mites — onion, cloves, garlic
squash bug — marigold, radish
squash vine borer — cloves, garlic, onion
stink bug — radish
tomato hornworm — marigold, sage
whitefly — marigold, nasturtium

Pest Control Recipes

Detergent Spray	1-2 tsp detergent + 1/2 c vegetable oil mixed into a litre of water
Molasses Spray	1 T molasses + 1 tsp liquid detergent in a litre of hot water
Vinegar Spray	1 part vinegar + 3 parts water + dash of detergent
Garlic Spray	3 cloves garlic, crushed + 1 T vegetable oil, let sit for 24 hours, strain add to 1 liter of water and 1 tsp of soap

SAVING SEEDS

Saving seed from crops provides an opportunity to capture traits most beneficial for your garden's unique conditions (e.g. soil type, climate, insect pests and diseases). By savings seed from vigorous plants with desirable traits, a grower can arrive at a variety that is uniquely adapted to their own backyard.

Considerations for home gardeners who wish to save their seeds:

- ∞ Do not save seed from hybrids. Seeds from hybrids will not produce offspring identical to parent plants.
- ∞ The vegetable seeds most easily saved are tomato, pepper, bean, cucumbers and squash.
- ∞ Collect seeds from fully mature, ripe fruit.
- ∞ Tomato seeds have a gelatinous coating. Remove this coating by fermenting it. Squeeze the seeds from a fully ripe fruit into a bowl, add water, and let stand for about three days. Once fermentation occurs, mold will form on the surface of the water. Add more water, stir and then gently scrape mold and debris off the top. Repeat until only clean seed remains, and then strain, rinse and leave the seeds at room temperature until dry.
- ∞ Some vegetables, like peppers, should be fully ripe before you try to

collect and save their seeds. For example, mature peppers should be completely red (or yellow or colored) before you extract the seeds. Cut the pepper open, scrape the seeds onto a plate, and let the seeds dry in a shaded place. Leave at room temperature until completely dry.

- ∞ Store most seed in airtight containers (i.e. glass jar).
- ∞ Legumes can be stored in breathable bags.
- ∞ Store your seeds in a cool, dark, dry place, like a refrigerator.
- ∞ Avoid opening the container until you are ready to plant.
- ∞ Stored seeds will retain their viability for different lengths of time. Melon seed can be stored for as long as five years, while sweet corn is only good for one year.

GARDENING TIPS FROM LOCAL FARMERS

“Think outside the box...try new and creative things! Be sure to keep the raised beds mulched when you are not growing anything. Pay attention to crop rotation and time your plantings to manage disease. Plant cut and come again crops and crops with a short-turn around time. For instance, you can plant three different crops of lettuce in the amount of time it may take to harvest broccoli. You can also take leaves of lettuce as needed without having to harvest cut the whole plant” – Joe Durando, Possum Hollow Farm, Alachua

“Don’t just focus on growing the plants, focus on growing the soil... it all begins with healthy soil. Don’t be discouraged and give up! Use diatomaceous earth for fire ants.” – Haley, Comet Farms and Ecological Growth, Worthington Springs

“In North Central Florida, you can grow crops in the shade that normally won’t grow in the hot summer sun.” – Mark, Devi’s Farm, Alachua

“Certain crops like spinach, cabbage, radish and turnips can easily be grown without using pesticides. In Fall, it is more difficult to grow the same crops that you would have better luck growing in Spring because of fungal and pest problems.” – Leo, Arcadian Farms, High Springs

“You can plant your herbs in shadier spots. Rotate which crops you plant in your plots so that pests and nematodes don’t take over.” – Rusty, Dogwood Lane Farm, Branford

“For most anything you grow, you will need fertile, aerated, well-drained soil. Unfortunately people in Gainesville have very sandy soil, so you need all the organic matter you can get into the soil like compost and peat... I like to use oak leaves and pine needles. Leafy greens like to grow in partial shade and tomatoes and peppers in full sun. In the winter you can grow all sorts of northern greens. Oriental radishes are easy to grow.” – Farmer John Steyer, Starke

“Timing, crop rotation and soil preparation are all very important for successful growing.” – Hemchan, Kumarie Organic Garden, Alachua

HUMAN NUTRITION AND GARDENING

Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food
-Hippocrates

Fruits, vegetables, and whole foods are better for your health than processed foods. Processed or refined foods, such as white flour used in bread, pastries, and pasta, often lack essential vitamins, minerals, fiber, oils, and other components that support full immune function.

Consuming refined foods results in the body extracting missing nutrients from the bones, tissues, and nerves. An unhealthy diet leads to cravings, addictions, stress, emotional imbalances, and diseases like diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and arthritis.

Food and agricultural traditions from around the world can inspire us with an amazing variety of wholesome, nutritious foods.

Here are a few examples of the nutritional benefits of some vegetables you can grow in your GIFT garden:

- ∞ **Carrots:** Carrots support the lungs, pancreas, liver, and kidneys. They support the elimination of waste, preventing constipation, lowering blood sugar, purifying the blood and treating indigestion. Carrots relieve menstrual pain and premenstrual irritability. They contain B vitamins, phosphorus, iodine, calcium, and the phenol coumarin, which helps prevent blood clotting and has anticancer properties.
- ∞ **Brassica Family:** Brassicas, such as collards, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, radishes, mustard, arugula, and turnips, aid the enzymes that ward off and detoxify carcinogens and other pathogens and prevent cancer. The dark, leafy vegetables in this family are exceptional sources of calcium,

magnesium, vitamins A and C and beta carotene. Collards contain nearly the same amount of calcium as milk.

- ∞ **Winter Squash:** Winter squashes, such as pumpkin, acorn, butternut, calabaza, etc. are medicinal to the pancreas and stomach; it also improves energy and circulation. Winter squash is exceptionally high in complex carbohydrates and is medicinal for diabetics and those with digestive problems. It provides vitamins A and C, potassium, iron, riboflavin, and magnesium, and is very low in sodium. It is an excellent source of pre-vitamin A and carotenoids, and therefore has anti-cancer properties. Pumpkin and squash, and especially their seeds, are highly nutritious, destroy intestinal worms and are high in zinc and omega-3 fatty acids.

VEGETABLE COOKING TIPS

To get the most out of your GIFT garden, you want the veggies that end up on your table to taste delicious! There are millions of great recipes out there, but to accomplish any of them, get to know the basics:

Washing Vegetables

Rinse vegetables under running water. Gently scrub roots such as beets and potatoes. To rinse greens, place in a bowl, fill with water, allow to sit for a few minutes so dirt will sink to the bottom, then pour off the water. Repeat, then dry in a salad spinner or strainer.

Cutting & Peeling Vegetables

Smaller chunks will cook faster than larger ones. Peeling is optional, not required, for most vegetables except winter squashes. Often the peels contain the most nutrients.

Boiling

Boiling is quick and easy, but some nutrients are lost in the water. Ideally, boil vegetables for just long enough to cook through, no longer. Bring salted water to a boil. Adding salt raises the boiling temperature, so veggies will cook faster, and will absorb the salty flavor. Add veggies only after water has boiled. Boil green vegetables with a lot of water, uncovered, all other vegetables with the lid and as little water as possible. Remove when veggies are soft enough to pierce with a fork, but before they lose their vibrant color. Add seasonings and/or butter.

Steaming

Steaming preserves more nutrients than boiling because the heat from the steam, not the water, is cooking the vegetables. Place vegetables in a steamer basket or metal colander. Boil a small amount of water at the bottom of the pan. Place the steamer or colander over the boiling water, then cover with a lid. If you don't have a basket or colander, you can simply cook the veggies in a very small amount of boiling water, but keep an eye on the water level. Most veggies take 3-5 minutes to steam, but dense roots like carrots may take longer. Remove from heat when veggies can be pierced with a fork, but before they lose color. Season.

Sautéing

Sautéing vegetables retains more flavor than steaming or boiling. If veggies are refrigerated, remove them and allow to return to room temperature before cooking. If you want to cook a variety of vegetables, keep in mind that denser veggies, like carrots and beets, will take longer to cook than softer veggies, such as squash or peas. You can ensure that all the veggies cook evenly, either by cutting slow-cooking veggies into smaller pieces, or by cooking them first, then adding fast-cooking veggies to the pan later. To sauté, heat a pan, then add oil or butter and allow to heat up. Add vegetables, stirring frequently, and any seasonings you enjoy. Cook until lightly browned and easily pierced with a fork.

Grilling

If you're firing up the BBQ, why not grill some vegetables along with your meat? Vegetables that have been marinated in your favorite sauce or salad dressing are particularly delicious. Grill smaller vegetables by piercing them with skewers, or grill whole, large slices of veggies such as eggplant and peppers.

Roasting

Roasting allows excess water to evaporate and sugars to condense, making veggies particularly sweet and delicious. Cut vegetables and coat thinly but evenly in oil. Add salt, herbs, or seasonings. Roast in a pan or baking dish at 400 degrees. You may want to stir the pan once during roasting if they are browning on the bottom. Some veggies, like tomatoes, take only 10 minutes to roast, while roots such as beets and potatoes can take 45 minutes to one hour.

SEASONAL RECIPES

If you have any delicious recipes from your GIFT Garden harvest, please let us know and we can publish them in the next edition of the GIFT Garden Growing Guide!

FALL HARVEST

Sauteed Kale

(Total Preparation Time: 10 minutes)

- 1 bunch green kale
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Rinse kale and shake off excess water. Stack leaves with all the stems pointed in the same direction, and roll them lengthwise into a tight bundle. With a sharp knife, trim stems and cut bundle crosswise into 1/4-inch ribbons. Greens may be cut in advance and refrigerated until just before serving time. When you are almost ready to serve the greens, put olive oil in a large saucepan over high heat. Add garlic, salt and pepper and then greens. Cook for 1-2 minutes, moving greens quickly around the pan with tongs until they are wilted. Remove from heat and serve at once.

Sauerkraut

While sauerkraut is the name for the traditional German recipe, many cultures ferment different combinations of ingredients and call it different names. For example, Korean fermented vegetables includes hot chili and is called "kim chi." Fermenting vegetables is a great way to preserve a bountiful harvest, as they will never spoil! Kraut also contains probiotic bacteria that are very beneficial for health, especially digestion. Kraut can be made from any vegetable that you like to eat raw. Cabbage, carrots, radishes, and turnips work particularly well.

Cut vegetables into small pieces or use a shredder. Mix with salt, to taste. The salt will also draw excess juice out of the vegetables, which will be crucial for the fermentation process. Tightly pack cut, salted veggies into a jar or crock with a wide, open mouth. Tamp down the veggies with your fist, a heavy bottle, or kitchen implement until the juices rise above the vegetable matter. The liquid creates an anaerobic environment in which bacteria thrive. The bacteria change the smell and taste of the vegetables, and also make some nutrients more readily available for digestion by

humans. *As long as the vegetables are submerged in liquid, they will not rot.* You can keep vegetables submerged by placing a plate on top and weighing it down with something heavy. Or, just check on your kraut every few days to make sure the vegetables are submerged. Vegetables left exposed to air will grow moldy. If the mold forms a layer on the top, you can simply scrape it aside and the kraut underneath will still be safe and delicious to eat. However, if the mold sinks into the bottom of the jar, it will ruin the kraut.

While it ferments, keep your kraut on the kitchen counter, covered loosely with a towel to keep out bugs. Sample it every few days. Warning: it will smell very strong! Some people love the smell; others find it offensive. Often, the smell is very different from the taste, so don't let the odor scare you from trying some! Some people like young krauts, fermented for only a few days. Others let it ferment for several months. It's a matter of personal taste.

When your kraut reaches a desirable flavor, you may want to refrigerate it to slow the fermentation process. In Florida's wet, hot climate, krauts tend to mold more easily than up North. Keep the veggies submerged, and if you start to notice a lot of mold, scrap it off and move the kraut to the refrigerator.

WINTER HARVEST

Scrumptious Creamy Cauliflower Soup (can be vegan)

(Total preparation time: 30 minutes)

1 onion
3 cloves garlic
1 large head of cauliflower
Thyme
Bay leaf - optional
Vegetable (or chicken) stock – optional
Soy, rice, or cow milk
Salt and Pepper

Begin by boiling water with soup stock. Chop cauliflower in to small chunks, peel garlic and chop onions. Add cauliflower, garlic, onions and thyme to boiling water and reduce to medium heat. Boil uncovered until the cauliflower is very soft and begins to fall apart. Add milk (soy or rice milk works great), reduce heat to low and continue to simmer for 10 minutes. Add salt and pepper. Either put soup in a blender or mash cauliflower by hand to blend together.

Old Fashioned Coleslaw

(Total Preparation Time: 5-10 minutes)

1 quart finely shredded cabbage

3/4 cup sour cream

1/2 teaspoon dry mustard

2 teaspoon sugar

1/2 teaspoon cider vinegar

salt and pepper to taste.

Blend all ingredients (except the cabbage) and whip for 1/2 a minute to mix thoroughly. Pour over shredded cabbage and toss to mix well.

SPRING HARVEST

Kale, Lettuce, Collard Wraps

The leaves of Dino Kale, lettuce or collards can be substituted for the traditional wheat burrito style wraps, soft taco shells or sandwich wraps. Be creative!

Ethiopian Collards (Ye'abesha Gomen)

1 lb. collard greens

1 cup red onions

4 green peppers

2 cups water

Vegetable Oil

Salt

Wash collard greens and boil in medium pan until soft. Remove from heat, drain, and cut into small pieces. Set aside. Wash green peppers, remove seeds, slice lengthwise and set aside. In the medium pan, cook onions over a low heat until brown adding a little water to prevent sticking and burning. Add oil. Add collard greens and cook until water disappears. Add all the spices and stir gently. Add green pepper slices and cook for 10 minutes. Serve hot or cold.

Cajun Collards

(Total Preparation Time: 20 minutes)

1 large bunch collard greens (about 1 lb) rinsed and chopped

1 yellow onion, diced

2 cloves garlic, diced

4 medium sized tomatoes

3/4 cup vegetable broth
1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
1/2 teaspoon hot sauce
2 tbsp olive oil
1/2 tsp garlic powder
salt and pepper, to taste
dash cayenne (optional)

Sautee onions and garlic in olive oil. Add vegetable broth and collard greens and cover. Allow to cook for about 6-8 minutes, until greens are slightly soft. Add remaining ingredients and cook for another 6-8 minutes, until greens are done, stirring occasionally.

Spring Vegetable Sautee

(Total Preparation Time: 30 minutes)

¾ pound new potatoes, cut in half
½ pound sugar snap peas, trimmed
2 tablespoons butter
3-4 small spring onions, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, minced
½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
2-3 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
Salt and Freshly ground black pepper

Place a large pot of salted water over high heat and bring to a boil. Add the potatoes and cook for 20 minutes, or until tender. Add the snap peas during the last 2 minutes of cooking time. Drain. Heat the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic and cook for 5 minutes, or until tender. Add the potatoes, snap peas, nutmeg, and mint. Toss to coat well. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Radish Salsa

(Total Preparation Time: 10 minutes)

½ cup finely diced organic radishes
½ cup seeded and diced ripe organic plum tomato (1 large tomato)
¼ cup finely chopped scallions (white parts only)
1 teaspoon minced garlic
2 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
1 teaspoon minced jalapeño or serrano pepper
2 tablespoons roughly chopped cilantro
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Gently stir all ingredients together in a serving bowl.

Savory Green Bean Soup

(Total Preparation Time: 20 minutes)

1/3 cup chopped green onions, leeks, or yellow onions

1 large clove garlic, peeled

1 tablespoon butter

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 1/2 pounds organic snap or runner beans

2 - 2 1/2 cups organic chicken broth

1 tablespoon minced fresh summer savory or 2 teaspoons minced fresh winter savory

1/4 teaspoon hot pepper sauce, or to taste

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1/2 cup heavy cream or half and half

Garnish: sprig of savory

In a large saucepot, sauté onions and garlic in butter and oil until wilted and slightly translucent. Add beans, savory, and broth and stir. Cover pan and simmer, stirring occasionally, until beans are just tender. Add hot sauce, salt and pepper, and process soup in the blender in batches. It will still be a bit stringy and have lumpy bits so at this point strain the soup through a colander. Pour the now smooth soup back into the saucepot and bring it to a simmer over low heat. Take off the heat and add the cream. Adjust seasoning if needed. Ladle into soup bowls, and garnish.

SUMMER HARVEST

Wendi's Simple Delicious Eggplant Stirfry (vegan)

(Total preparation time: 25 minutes)

1 large, 2 medium, or 3 small eggplant (preferably long Asian variety)

2 or 3 tablespoons olive oil

garlic

onion

salt and pepper

garden herbs (Rosemary, Basil, Parsley, Oregano, Thyme)

Precook by chopping eggplant into thin round pieces with skin still on (thin cutting is the key to success with this recipe). Chop onion, garlic, and herbs into small pieces. In a large skillet heat olive oil over medium heat. Sauté eggplant and onion for 10 minutes. Add garlic and herbs. Cook until eggplant begins to become translucent and soft. Add salt and pepper.

North African Okra

(Total Preparation Time: 15 minutes)

½ teaspoon cumin seeds

1 tablespoon organic olive oil

7 - 9 okra pods, sliced into ½-inch rounds, stem ends discarded

1 teaspoon tomato paste

1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat the cumin seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat for 30 seconds or so, until they become fragrant. Then transfer them to a mortar and, when they're cool, grind them up with a pestle. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat, add the olive oil, and when hot add the okra. It only takes a few minutes for the okra to tighten up and acquire a little crunchy browning. Once this happens, add the tomato paste and lemon juice, the ground cumin, and salt and pepper to taste. Reduce the heat to medium-low and continue cooking for another minute or so, stirring occasionally, until the okra is fully tender and coated with the tomato mixture.

Mid-Summer Harvest Pasta Sauce

(Total preparation time: 30 minutes)

6 large tomatoes

1 large onion

4 cloves garlic

1 zucchini

1 eggplant

1 red or green pepper

sprigs of fresh oregano, parsley, basil, thyme and rosemary

1 tbs. olive oil

Salt and Pepper

Precook by cubing tomato, onion, garlic, zucchini, eggplant (thin slices), and chopping herbs into small pieces. Chop basil and keep separate. In a medium saucepan, heat olive oil over medium heat. Sauté onion and eggplant for 10 minutes until onion is translucent and eggplant begins to soften. Lower heat to medium-low and add tomatoes, garlic, zucchini, and herbs (except basil). Bring to a boil, then simmer for another 15-20 minutes. Add chopped basil and salt and pepper at the end.

Early Summer Salsa

(Total preparation time: 10 minutes)

2 large tomatoes or 1 cup small tomatoes

1 small onion or ¼ cup green onion

½ cup cilantro or parsley
1 hot or sweet pepper (optional)
1 lime
Salt and pepper

Chop (or put in blender or food processor) all ingredients except lime. Squeeze lime into mixture. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Yummy Pesto

(Total preparation time: 5-10 minutes)

1 ½ cup basil
½ cup pine nuts or walnuts
2 medium cloves garlic (or 1 clove if you do not appreciate garlicky food)
¼ cup olive oil
¼ cup parmesan or romano cheese (optional)
Salt and pepper

Put all ingredients in food processor or blender (or chop finely). Eat with pasta, crackers or toast.

Connie's Cucumber Vegetable Salad

(Total preparation time: 10 minutes)

1 cucumber, washed, halved and sliced very thin
1 red onion, halved and sliced very thin
1 yellow bell pepper, halved and sliced very thin
1 cup julienne carrots
2 tomatoes, seeded and diced
salt and pepper
1/2 cup Italian dressing

Place diced tomatoes and cucumber in large bowl. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, then set aside. Prepare remaining vegetables and add to tomato and cucumbers and mix. Pour dressing over vegetables. Salt and pepper to taste. Let set several hours before serving.

LOCAL GARDENING RESOURCES

∞ FREE Advice from Florida Organic Growers!

Last but certainly not least, Florida Organic Growers will assist you in any way possible as you learn to maintain your garden. Call 352.377.6345 or email fog@foginfo.org with any questions.

∞ FREE Bat Guano Fertilizer from University of Florida (UF)

UF provides free bat guano from the bat houses. Anybody can receive a five-gallon buckets of bat guano per trip at the address provided below. You must call first, though!

Raw bat guano is high in phosphorus, nitrogen, trace minerals, organic matter and microbial flora which will enhance soil and boost harvests in your garden. To use, mix 1 cup per gallon of water and feed soil around established plants.

UF – Environmental Health and Safety Services
Ken Glover - 352.392.3410 (CALL FIRST!)

Location: 3051 Long Leaf Rd. Building 683 of Surge Area Drive off Archer Road at UF. From 441 - Take Archer Road to Surge Drive and go right. When you enter the Surge Area, take the first left and park at Bldg. 683. The bat guano is in a locked area near the building. Remember to bring a bucket!

∞ FREE Coffee Grounds from Local Coffee Shops

Coffee grounds make an excellent soil amendment for vegetable gardens. They contain a very high content of nitrogen, tannic acids and other nutrients, and will deter some pests such as slugs and snails. To use, sprinkle the soil around established plants, prepare new soils by mixing in a generous heap or dilute with water for fast-acting liquid fertilizer. Most coffee shops will gladly give you ground for free.

∞ FREE Compost Bins from Alachua County Department of Waste Alternatives

Alachua County provides up to two free wire compost bins per resident, plus kitchen keepers compost buckets and a guide on composting. Pick-up compost bins at the address below.

Alachua County Department of Waste Alternatives
5620 N.W. 120th Lane
Gainesville, FL 32653
352.374.5213

∞ **FREE Gardening Classes and Advice from Alachua County Extension**

In addition to providing the community with excellent online gardening information and resources, the Alachua County Extension office also teaches free monthly gardening classes and offers a Master Gardeners certification for residents who want more intensive horticultural training and to help others in the community with their gardens.

Office Location:
2800 NE 39th Ave.
Gainesville, FL 32609
352.955.2402
alachua@ifas.ufl.edu
<http://alachua.ifas.ufl.edu/>

∞ **FREE Mulch from Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU)**

GRU provides large truckloads of free wood chips delivered to GRU customers. Obtain a Woodchip Recycling Application from GRU workers cutting trees in orange Asplundh fleet trucks and return it to them. Or contact GRU at 352.393.1813. Applications can also be found on GRU's website www.gru.com/YourHome/ProductsServices/woodchip.jsp

∞ **INEXPENSIVE Perennial Plants from the Edible Plant Project**

The Edible Plant Project (EPP) is a not-for-profit, volunteer-based group working to promote edible landscaping and local food abundance in North Central Florida. The goal of the EPP is to create positive alternatives to the unsustainable food system in this country. While plants from this non-profit organization are not free, they are low-priced so anybody who wishes to plant edible plants can. EPP holds monthly plant sales at the downtown farmer's market on the first Wednesday of each month. For more information, go to EPP's website: <http://edibleplantproject.org>

∞ **Seasonal Seeds from GROW Gainesville Seed Library**

The seed library collectively bulk purchases seeds that grow well here in North Florida, and distributes them twice a year. Additionally, it is a place where locally saved seed is donated and distributed to local gardeners. Residents receiving a GIFT Garden get a free one-year membership to GROW Gainesville. Others can join for a \$20 donation per year. For more information, call Melissa DeSa at 352-284-4053

FOR FURTHER READING

Alachua County libraries have an excellent selection of books available for more in-depth reading about home vegetable gardening, organic methods, composting, mulching, saving seeds, soil fertility and weed and pest management. Listed below are books recommended for further reading.

1001 All-Natural Secrets to a Pest-Free Property. By Dr. Myles H. Bader

1,001 Old-Time Garden Tips: Timeless Bits of Wisdom on How to Grow Everything Organically, from the Good Old Days When Everyone Did.
Edited by Roger Yepsen.

The 20-minute Vegetable Gardener: Gourmet Gardening for the Rest of Us.
By Tom Christopher and Marty Asher.

Carrots Love Tomatoes: Secrets of Companion Planting for Successful Gardening. By Louise Riotte.

The Cook's Garden: Growing and Using the Best-Tasting Vegetable Varieties.
By Shepherd and Ellen Ogden.

Four Season Harvest: Organic Vegetables from Your Home Garden All Year Long. By Eliot Coleman.

Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture. By Toby Hemenway.

The Gardener's A-Z Guide to Growing Organic Food. By Tanya L.K. Denckla

Gardening for the Future of the Earth: The masters of organic gardening show you how to create natural bounty in your own backyard and help save the planet one seed at a time. By Howard-Yana Shapiro, Ph.D. and John Harrison.

Gardening in Small Spaces: How to Make the Most of Every Square Foot. By Marcus Schneck.

Getting Started in Permaculture: Over 50 DIY Projects for House & Garden Using Recycled Materials. By Ross and Jenny Mars.

Growing and Saving Vegetable Seeds. By Marc Rogers.

How to Grow More Vegetables Than You Ever Thought Possible. By John Jeavons.

Jeff Ball's 60-Minute Garden: One Hour a Week is All It Takes to Garden Successfully. By Jeff Ball.

The Kitchen Garden: Fresh Ideas for Luscious Vegetables, Herbs, Flowers and Fruit. By Norma Coney

The Kitchen Garden: A Practical Guide to Planning and Planting. By Andi Clevely.

Lasagna Gardening. A New Layering System for Bountiful Gardens: No Digging, No Tilling, No Weeding, No Kidding! By Patricia Lanza.

Let It Rot: The Gardeners Guide to Composting. By Stu Campbell.

Magic Muck: The Complete Guide to Compost. By Lady Muck.

Month-By-Month Gardening in Florida. By Tom McCubbin.

The Mulch Book: A Complete Guide For Gardeners. By Stu Campbell.

The No-Work Garden: Getting the Most Out of Your Garden for the Least Amount of Work. By Bob Flowerdew.

Perennial Vegetables: From Artichoke to 'Zuiki' Taro, A Gardeners Guide to Over 100 Delicious, Easy-to-Grow Edibles. By Eric Toensmeier.

Rodale Organic Gardening Solutions: Over 500 Answers to Real Life Questions from Backyard Gardeners. By Cheryl Long and the editors of Organic Gardening Magazine.

Step-By-Step Gardening Techniques Illustrated. By Elayne Sears.

Square-Foot Gardening: A New Way To Garden in Less Space With Less Work. By Mel Bartholomew.

Successful Small-Scale Organic Farming: An Organic Approach. By Karl Schwenke.

Vegetable Gardening in Florida. By James M. Stephens
A Florida Organic Growers staff favorite!

Weedless Gardening: Introducing a System of Gardening that Protects the Soil, Eliminates Heavy Work, and Reduces Water Needs. By Lee Reich.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The Alachua County Extension Office
solutionforyourlife.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/

Block-Style Layouts in Raised Bed Vegetable Gardens:
www.cmg.colostate.edu/gardennotes/713.pdf

Edible Plant Project
<http://edibleplantproject.org>

Florida Organic Growers: www.foginfo.org

Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VH021>

Gardening Links for Florida Gardeners:
www.donitaworld.com/States/Florida/main.html

GROW Gainesville
www.growgainesville.wordpress.com

Save Our Seed: www.savingourseeds.org

Square Foot Gardening: www.squarefootgardening.com/

A Vegetable Gardening Guide for the Organic Grower:
www.vegetablegardeningguru.com/

Websites for Purchasing Organic Seeds:
www.southernexposure.com
www.johnnyseeds.com

FLORIDA CERTIFIED ORGANIC GROWERS AND CONSUMERS, INC.

Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc. (FOG) is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization based in Gainesville since 1989. FOG's mission is to promote organic and sustainable agriculture and healthy and just food systems. Through its education and outreach program, FOG educates producers, consumers, the media, institutions and governments about the benefits of organic and sustainable agriculture. The evaluation and development of public policy is an important part of FOG's education and outreach activities. FOG staff conduct, coordinate and participate in educational events in a diversity of areas relating to organic agriculture at local, national and international venues. GIFT Gardens is part of a larger effort to cultivate healthy community food systems and improve food security for local residents. To meet the demand of a growing organic industry, FOG operates Quality Certification Services (QCS), which provides verification of the organic integrity of organic farming and processing systems, providing agricultural operators a valuable tool for differentiating their products in the marketplace.

front cover illustration: Amanda Dean



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