

EVALUATION AND LOOKING AHEAD

Annual vegetables and weeds grow quickly, but good gardening skills develop over many years. It's easy to make mistakes such as seeding spinach too late, so it flowers immediately, or planting a beefsteak variety tomato that doesn't mature in Seattle's cool summers. Unfortunately, you must wait a whole year to get a second chance. For most of us, the only way to remember well and to learn from our mistakes is to keep good garden records and use them in planning for next season.

The information you gather can help you:

- Grow varieties that will grow and taste good and avoid the bad ones
- Plant things at the right time and in the right place and avoid previous mistakes
- Set up rotations that help you avoid disease and insect problems
- Get the most from fertilizer, compost and lime applications

To be useful, a garden "log" should record:

1. What you plant (crop, variety and seed company)
2. Dates crops were started and transplanted
3. What fertilizers and soil amendments were added
4. When and how much was harvested
5. Insect or disease problems
6. Personal opinion of crop quality
7. Ideas for what you'd like to try next year (otherwise, you'll never remember when the time comes)

If you would like to try using a form we have put together, ask us for Community Horticulture Fact Sheet #4

Only you can say what vegetable variety tastes good to you. But, when it comes to how well a plant grows and whether it matures on time, some of our publications may help guarantee success. You can make sure that you are planting the correct variety at the best time. Water, fertilization, soil quality and light all contribute, but the "right plant at the right time" can be the determining factor in successful gardening.

Several of our other publications may be helpful to you. Solutions to most common vegetable problems are outlined in the charts on pages 14-24 of **Home Gardens** (EB #422). Also useful are fact sheets #25

Recommended Vegetable Cultivars and #8 **Starting Garden Crops Indoors**. The publication and Fact Sheets listed above are available from the WSU Extension office. The fact sheets are free of charge.



ROTATIONS

There are several reasons for using crop rotations and many ways to do it. For most home gardeners, simple rotations are sufficient. The most important rules are:

General – Vegetables of the same group should not be grown in the same place two years in a row.

Potatoes – Do not plant potatoes in the same spot more often than every third year. Allow at least one year between applying lime and growing potatoes in sandy soils, two years in clay soils. (Lime increases the potato scab problems.)

Legumes – Grow a legume at least every three years in every spot. Clover, vetch, etc. as winter cover crops will help you do this.

Rotate crops to avoid the build-up of disease and insects and the depletion of nutrients. Different crops use nutrients in varying amounts and from different soil depths. With rotations, you make the best use of fertilizers, lime and soil nutrients. Rotating plantings by family or groups is as effective as rotating specific crops.

Here are the general groups with comments on their specific needs:

- * Greens: Lettuce, spinach, chard, celery, etc. taste best if grown with plenty of nitrogen and a sweet (recently limed) soil.
- * Roots: Beets, carrots, potatoes need potassium, loose organic soil, not a lot of nitrogen. Prefer neutral soil (except potatoes).
- * Fruits: Tomatoes, squash, peppers require high phosphorous.
- * Legumes: Peas and beans like a limed soil and high phosphorous.
- * Cabbage family crops: Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, choys, turnip, radish, mustards, collards, kale like a recently limed soil and lots of nitrogen.
- * Corn: Corn is a heavy feeder. It likes a limed soil, lots of nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous.
- * Onion family: Garlic, leeks, onions, shallots like a loose, organic soil.

SUGGESTED THREE YEAR ROTATION PLAN

Year:	1, 4, etc.	2, 5, etc.	3,6, etc.
Soil Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Dig bed deeply *Add compost *Lime (do preceding fall, if possible) *Add complete fertilizer, high in nitrogen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Add fertilizer, high in phosphorus *Cover soil with black plastic for fruit crops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Remove rocks and twigs *Add compost *Use <u>no</u> manure of lime *Add fertilizer, high in potassium
Crops	Cabbage family Greens Corn	Legumes Fruit Crops	Root Crops Potatoes Onions
Over winter	Cabbage family Greens	Fava Beans Cover Crop	Onions Cover Crop