



Fun and Interesting Ways to Plant Vegetables

By Erika Stewart

Vegetables are usually planted in rows. That's a tried-and-true, but there are other ways to plant a garden. Gardeners are experimenters, so maybe you would like to try one or more of these vegetable planting methods.

Square Foot Garden- First enrich your garden box soil with compost, fertilizer, or composted manure. Then divide the box up into square foot sections with a grid of wood or with any marker that will last through the gardening season. Each square is planted thickly with one type of vegetable or herb. Lettuces, carrots, beets, radishes, Swiss chard, spinach, and basil are all good candidates for this type of bed. The concept is that the greatly enriched soil allows you to plant denser than you normally would, so you get a lot of food from a small space.

Straw Bale Garden-Source a bale or two of straw and put them in a part of your yard that gets 6 to 8 hours of sun a day. You will need to condition the bales for two weeks before planting. Water the bale thoroughly so that they are completely wet. Next, put about ½ cup of high nitrogen fertilizer on each bale. Water the bales daily and every other day add another half cup of fertilizer. During the second week cut the amount of fertilizer down by half and continue to water. At the end of two weeks, the bales should feel warm if you work your hand into them. If it's hot, then water the bales for several days until they cool down. Once only slightly warm you can start planting. It's helpful to add a little garden soil to the tops of the bales. Dig into the straw where it has started to decompose and set in your plants or seeds. You can grow two full sized tomato plants per bale or any other vegetable or herb you want. As the bales continue to decompose, they will feed the plants.

Vertical Garden- This garden style is a great space saver. Peas and beans grow on trellises, but any vining plant can be grown up rather than along the ground. Small to medium sized squash can be grown this way, as well as cucumbers. It's so simple, but it does require a few trellises. For these you could use hog panels for

heavy plants like squash, or chicken wire strung between posts for lighter weight vegetables. It is best to position these trellises on the north side of the garden, so they don't block the sun for shorter vegetables. These trellises can be used year after year.

Three simple methods—with a twist. Have fun with them.

Learn more about gardening from the WSU Mason County Master Gardeners by submitting questions to the Plant Clinic at masonmastergardener@gmail.com
Mason County Master Gardeners can be reached at 360-427-9670 ext.687

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