

## Vegetables as Landscape Plants

Why are vegetable gardens relegated to the far corner of the back yard? Who decided that plants that produce food do not also have ornamental value? It is time to debunk this myth! The large purple orb of a cabbage plant or the red stalks of rhubarb are just as attractive as a marigold or a petunia. Another benefit to putting your vegetables into your flower bed is that dinner may be a lot closer to the kitchen.

To get you started, here are some specific vegetable varieties that have ornamental qualities. Experiment with other vegetables and varieties. Be sure to check the growing requirements to make sure your yard and micro-climate will help the vegetables flourish. Most vegetables require lots of direct sunlight and well-draining neutral soil. Inter-plant annual flowers amongst the short-season vegetables (such as lettuces and radishes) so that once you harvest, the space will quickly be filled in.

Note: All varieties are edible unless otherwise noted.

Vegetable	Variety	Description
Artichoke	Violetto	Violet bracts
Asparagus	Purple Passion	Burgundy stalks
Runner Beans	Painted Lady Scarlet Emperor Dwarf Bees	Red flowers Scarlet-orange flowers Small bush plant for border
Broccoli	Minaret Rosalind	Unusual spiral clusters Violet heads
Cabbage	Ruby Ball Walking Stick	Purple heads Long stems (ornamental)
Cardoon		Similar to artichoke except the stems are eaten.
Indian Corn	Indian Summer Painted Mountain Chinook	Multi-colored kernels Vivid oranges & reds Dark maroon to tan (ornamental)
Popcorn	Calico Early Pink	Long ears, multi-colored Only 85 days!

<b>Vegetable</b>	<b>Variety</b>	<b>Description</b>
Eggplant	Bride Bambino Zebra Hybrid	Slender white/purple fruits Dwarf plant good for pot or border Deep violet/white variegated
Top setting Onion	Egyptian Walking Catawissa	Both produce clusters of bulblets at the top of each stalk
Kale	Redbor Nero di Toscana Red Russian	Magenta leaves Dark green crinkly leaves Frisly, blue-green leaves, red veins
Kohlrabi	Kolibri	Great for a border where the purple bulbs can be seen bulging out
Lettuce	Devils Tongue many others	Bright red new growth
Okra	Annie Oakley	Hibiscus-like flowers are gorgeous!
Oriental Greens	Edible Chrysanthemum Osaka Purple Mustard Giant Red Mustard	Eat the leaves and flowers Purple-tinted leaves Burgundy leaves
Peppers	Sweet Pickle, Pretty Purple, Marbles, Medusa, Riot, Bolivian Rainbow, Chilly Chili Hybrid, Filus Blue, Largo Purple, Numex Twilight, Poinsettia, Starburst, Thai Hot Ornamental, Tri-fetti	Can plant in pots or yard. Can be pickled or chili-like peppers can be dried. Largo Purple has violet foliage and Tri-fetti has variegated green/white/purple foliage. Other peppers that are red, orange, or yellow also make good landscape plants.
Radish	Rat-Tailed	Violet-tinged seedpods
Rhubarb	Victoria	Red stalks, large leaves
Swiss Chard	Rhubarb Bright Lights	Red stems, red-veined leaves Stems are red, yellow, orange, gold, or white

Vegetable	Variety	Description
Tomatoes	Sungold (Cherry) Yellow Pear (Cherry) Schimmeig Striped Hollow (Stuffer) many others	Bright orange fruit covers plant Yellow fruit covers plant Red fruit with gold streaks
Vine Crops	Jack Be Little Pumpkin Baby Boo Pumpkin Lemon Cucumber Delicata Squash Sunburst Squash Swan Gourd	Small orange fruits (ornamental) Small white fruits (ornamental) Delicious lemon-colored fruit Yellow/Green striped fruit Bright yellow patty-pan fruit Speckled swan-shaped necks (ornamental)

Be sure to also plant some culinary herbs close to the kitchen. Chives, basil, rosemary, sage, oregano, thyme, marjoram, bronze fennel, and anise hyssop all produce flowers. In addition to being pretty, the flowers also attract bees and butterflies. As a further reward, the succulent foliage of herbs will season your favorite recipes.

Imagine walking through your yard with some friends, nonchalantly picking a few tomatoes, a pepper, and a few sprigs of basil. Now bring them into the house, pour a glass of wine, chop those ultra-fresh veggies, toast some french bread, and voila – instant bruschetta from your yard. Won't they be impressed?

## Seed Sources

### [Territorial Seed](#)

Phone: 541-942-9547

### [Tomato Growers Supply Company](#)

Phone: 888-478-7333

### [Johnny's Selected Seeds](#)

Phone: 1-877-564-6697

### [Nichols Garden Nursery](#)

Phone: 800-422-3985

## References

Schoneweis, S.D. (1996). [Vegetables and Herbs as Ornamentals](#). Retrieved March 2, 2003, from University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Cooperative Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Whipker, B.E., McCall, I., Gibson, J.L. (1999). [Ornamental Pepper Cultivar Trial](#). Retrieved March 2, 2003, from North Carolina State University, Horticulture Department.

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