



Project List:

Vegetable Gardening

Everyone loves the fresh tastes and cooking possibilities from having your own vegetables. Most growers will want to use organic growing practices to maximize nutrition. Start with high-quality soil and plant by seed or transplant at the proper time, and you'll enjoy the rewards from growing your own food. This checklist gives you the most important points.

SITE:

The first season can be more difficult with smaller yields, but have patience! *Choose your site carefully* - vegetables need at least 6 hours of sun, and preferably 8 or more. Plan for ease of frequent maintenance. Amend and plant directly, or use **raised beds**, which give you much greater success with many plants due to their increased drainage and ease of soil turning. Larger **containers** (5-15 gallon sizes or larger) can also work for many types of vegetables.

SOIL:

Don't treat your soil like dirt! Vegetables need *the best* soil health you can give them in order to get the best results. For **containers**, try our **NHG Organic Potting Soil**. For raised beds, start with a heavier base and amend. For in-ground situations, amend focusing on compost to lighten the soil and add drainage, or you can use your own compost and recipe. Garden Advisor can give you ratios and quantities needed for your gardening situation:

YOUR SOIL PREP CHECKLIST

Soil Mix - (as the base layer)

Mayer Raised Bed & Garden _____

Amendments - (as the top layer for raised beds; omit Topsoil if planting in-ground)

Vital Earth Organic Compost _____ Mayer Materials Garden Soil Acidifier _____

Mayer Materials Rejuvenate _____ Jemasco Cow Compost & Manure _____

Mayer Materials Topsoil _____ Guard-N Soil Inoculant (for beans & peas) _____

Fertilizer - add an organic food to all mixes at label directions or 2 lbs per 100 sq ft:

Espoma Garden-tone _____ Espoma Tomato-tone _____

Texas Tee (add to in-ground situations especially to give additional nitrogen) _____

Thoroughly blend the top layer of products, moisten the finished soil as needed, and plant.

Mulch - water first, then add a 2 - 3" layer of mulch. Pine straw (needles) works well for many vegetables, or use shredded cedar or hardwood. Afterward, lightly water again. Do not mulch areas to be seeded. Remember to maintain the mulch layer as the plants grow.

See the reverse for other amendments to maximize your produce!

Additional Amendments for Vegetable Gardens

Try adding these other ingredients to help ensure your success:

YOUR AMENDMENT CHECKLIST

Espoma Bio-tone Starter Plus _____

An organic soil bacteria jump-starter, food, & bio-stimulant for new soils. *Must contact roots*

Dried or Liquid Molasses _____

Adds needed sugars to boost the population & activity of soil bacteria

Liquid Seaweed _____

Supplies trace nutrients and a good pest repellent; apply as a drench or spray

Texas Greensand or Azomite _____

Greensand supplies potassium & iron; Azomite adds many other valuable trace nutrients

Garrett Juice or Garret Juice Pro _____

A biostimulant blend of compost tea, apple cider vinegar, molasses, seaweed, & liquid fish, with Pro adding beneficial soil bacteria and fungi; boosts biological activity _____

Worm Castings _____

Earthworm castings supply a dose of beneficial soil bacteria, and makes digested nutrients more available for plants. Ideal for adding disease resistance to seeds

PLANTING: Consult our *Vegetable Planting Dates for North Texas* handout for month to month recommended planting dates by seed or transplant for spring and fall seasons.

CULTURE: As the growing season progresses, remember to continue to fertilize at the rates on the label for your chosen crop. Most will require feeding once per month at the very least. Note that this is especially important in the first year as the soil matures.

SECOND SEASON & THEREAFTER

- Maintain an even approach to watering whenever possible. Watch for earthworms to appear as the soil ages and the nutrients become more available to your plants.
- It is normal for the soil to settle, and the organic matter to be used up by the plants each season. Add additional prepared **soil mix**, or the **composts**, **Garden Soil Acidifier**, or **manure** and **fertilizer**. Turn this upper layer and moisten prior to starting the next planting season. See a Garden Advisor for rates and help in choosing amendments.
- Unless seeding, make sure the mulch layer is maintained at all times.
- Monitor your growing garden carefully— daily if possible—for potential pest and disease problems to catch them early and maximize your harvests.

Vegetable gardening can be a challenge. Ask a Garden Advisor for help.