

Insider Tip Secrets

HOME Vegetable Gardening



Tilling the Soil in Your Own Backyard Vegetable Garden

Preparation, Planting & Vegetable Patch Care for Home-grown Produce

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A. First Things First!

- **Foreword And Introduction**
- **The Reasoning And Inspiration Behind Gardening And Cultivating Your Own Home-Grown Vegetable Patch**
- **What You Will Need For Your Home Garden**

Some see gardening as a hobby, relaxation, a way to get close(r) or back to nature, slow down, keep busy, spend time outdoors, lead a balanced life and just enjoy something active, associating with growth and life, even therapy or shared family moments!

Regardless of what brings you to this wonderful age-old tradition and activity, gardening offers something for everyone. For others, it is a means of making the family budget work, with some additional fresh produce to bring the bounty of nature to the tables and plates of a needy family wanting to live healthier lives.

If you do have some space in your backyard to dedicate to small vegetable gardening patch, make the most of it this season and recapture some of the lost traditions and proud home-making crafts and hobbies of times and eras past and long gone, when people lived simpler, less hectic lives. Experience creating something unique with the help of mother nature that you can eat, relish and enjoy!

Back to simpler times and simple methods. Some gardening tools might have changed throughout the ages, but certainly the tilling

and toiling, digging, preparing, seeding, watering, weeding, trimming and gardening per se have not! For the most part, we seed, plant, water, weed and pick in the same fashion as we have always done.

For many it still makes sense to save money by planting, growing, cultivating, caring for, sharing and enjoying the fruits (and vegetables!) of their hands and labor. A task and labor of love require patience and persistence.

Not only are you saving money when planting and harvesting your veggies and fruits at home, you know that they are organic for the most part. When ripe and picked, they are at the peak of their freshness and perfection and not stuck being imported, transported, chilled and somewhat wilted, stuck on a shelf for a day or two, by the time you get to bring them home from the grocer or big-box store!

Fresh is hard to beat. When it comes to off the vines, from the ground, trees, washed, trimmed, eaten raw, steamed or lightly cooked to preserve all the nutrients, they are so much better than store-bought! So cheaper and better? Cannot go wrong here!

Home gardening and backyard vegetable patches provide you with a sense of satisfaction and reward beyond saving money! You make an investment in yourself, your nutrition and your health. You also contribute to ensuring your family gets the freshest, juiciest veggies picked at their prime and served with immediacy to get the most nutritional value and taste from them you possibly can. Enjoying

nature's gifts in this fashion is a great way to cultivate a love of life and good food too. You will not be sacrificing quality, value and worth one bit! It will be worth every penny spent in time, labor and effort!

Some of the offerings from seeds are also not available in the grocery or vegetable sections of most modern stores. Some varieties are unique and organic, offering you healthy alternatives that are pesticide free and not genetically altered in any way. Typically, some of these are not viable for commercial growers, so we do not see them as often. You have the wonderful opportunity of donning your veggie-rows at home, customized and personalized to your preference and choice!

These days, most of us do not have full time, dedicated gardeners, so we do the next best thing. WE BECOME BACKYARD VEGETABLE GROWERS OF EXCELLENCE!

An added bonus is the lifestyle change it brings with it. The bonus of fresh air, sunlight, being outdoors, doing something physical (which our bodies are designed to do best!), moving around and spending quiet time, busying ourselves with something else than work, family and hectic living, is good for a balanced, all-round healthier life.

Spending time tilling and toiling in the sand, amidst the trees, sun and shade, clear blue sky and gentle breeze. Watching for rain, caring for seeds, weeding and watering, all relaxes and feeds the soul! Later, as summer rolls round, you will be greatly rewarded

again with the fruits/veggies of your hand and labor. From garden to table! Home vegetable gardening is not only about saving money, getting the freshest veggies possible, but also about good, happy and healthy living all-round! It is the 'cheapest' therapy around!

It just asks for will, commitment and care, some hard hand-in old-style labor and honest day's work. Far gone are the days that this is how breadwinners provided for their family's needs, but you can recapture some of the wonderful benefits of this age-old tradition here and now today, in your own backyard. Start a new family tradition of your very own! You can teach your children about the wonder of life, growth and nature. Rekindle your relationship with the world and life around you and re-energize your spirit, to be in touch and one with nature and creation, of which we are such a great part.

We all know the best way to get to know or master something is to get to it! So, without delay, we invite you outside...let us go vegetable gardening!

Grab your hat, gloves and gardening shoes, put on the sun block, sunglasses and step outside...Look around you. Where would be a good, sunny, partially shady spot ideal for a vegetable patch? Found your corner? Let us get started then.

There are many opinions as to where the best or 'perfect' spot for a garden should be. It does not have to be 'hidden' away or the most

unsightly spot on your property. If it is well planned, laid out, positioned and cared for, it can add quite some ambience to your dwellings. There is nothing more homely than a homegrown garden, showing off your green thumb and outdoor prowess!

For most of our urban-style properties, we will be lucky to find some space and sometimes we cannot be too meticulous and have to make the most of what we have at our disposal in the end. For larger properties, sometimes picking a spot behind the garage, next to a boundary-fence, at the far-end of the property or close to outbuildings will make the most sense. For city-type properties, some even resort to 'container' style or conservatory-type gardens to optimize their homegrown vegetables. The choice of location is really up to you. Pick what you will be comfortable with, as it will form part of the landscape and surroundings you spend time in and look at every day.

Pick a spot that is easy to get to and that gets some sunlight throughout the day. Plants need sun and water, as well as good soil to grow and thrive. Try to create an environment most conducive to these requirements. Stack all odds in favor of the plant growth and you are all set for success.

Also, make it easy for you to get to. If you are going to spend a lot of time working, watering, weeding and caring for your vegetable patch and backyard garden, good accessibility and the shortest route possible to get to /in your garden is essential.

Exposure to sun, shade, wind, the elements and all weather nature can throw at you and your vegetable garden, is a crucial success factor and one of the first major criteria for any location you might realistically have in mind.

Making the most of sunlight throughout the day as well as providing shelter against cold winds and frost can all contribute to having your vegetable garden more than merely survive, bear fruit and reward your efforts and troubles.

Slight slopes, facing east or south are considered best for backyard vegetable gardens. If you do choose to give it some shelter, using a back-building wall of fence to shelter, it from the elements will go a long way to protect your young plants and garden-in-the-making. To get it off to an early good start consider protecting it from invasion or too much exposure either way by light coverings or fencing.

You can even invest in a living fence or hedging to protect and beautify it even further. As a newcomer to home-gardening and growing vegetables in your backyard, we oftentimes overlook these simple fundamentals and basics and then do not understand why our veggies are not 'growing' as well. All these factors interplay and feed off one another to create the best and most welcoming environment for your plants to grow and thrive in.

Whether you are an amateur or seasoned outdoor gardening enthusiast, paying a little more attention to the small details will go a long way in guaranteeing your successful backyard gardening and

fresh vegetables all season long. It takes both planning and execution to make this one work well!

Other considerations include the ground or soil that the plants are expected to root and grow in and from. It almost goes without saying that in most urban areas, you will have to pay some close attention to the soil as they will not be 'user' or plant ready off the bat, or naturally fertile ground for plant-life.

With all the products available these days from home gardening center, farm-cooperatives and even local farmers (like manure etc.), it will not take much to create the perfect environment for your vegetable patch and/or backyard produce garden.

These 'gardens' or patches are typically smaller in size and scope and does not require that much square footage of feed, soil or products, so it is still cost-effective and worthwhile to do and consider.

Pure, uncultivated, even building sand or fillers (after residential development) are quite common on our modern properties. They will require some detailed preparation and upgrade PRIOR to starting any planting of any kind. This will be your first taste of what it takes to be a backyard vegetable gardener. This is where the real work starts.

Healthy or fertile soil (or more specifically the lack thereof) does not have to be a deterrent or leave you discouraged. There are many options for feeding and upgrading the soil to be very fertile and

welcoming to plant-life of all shapes, sizes and challenges. YOU CAN RISE TO THE CHALLENGE! Throw your energy and early dedication into this aspect of your veggie patch and you will be pleasantly surprised by your results down the line. Cultivation and feeding, and all other related forms of soil preparation, should also not be underestimated. It can make or break the success of your garden!

Some avid gardeners have described the perfect growing environments and mixtures of soil as a "rich-looking, textured, sandy loam."

Typically, you will not be merely finding these fertile breeding grounds, you will have to build it from the ground up so to speak. bit, by bit.

You are working on creating the perfect environment for plants to sprout, root, grow and thrive. Plants need nutrition, feeding, care and cultivation, as well as watering and sunshine.

Accessible nutrients in the soil are a key ingredient for your growth recipe for success for any and all backyard vegetable gardening. Availability of these plant-foods and nutrients are part of your set-up and preparation steps that cannot be overlooked or underestimated. It is the one thing you need to absolutely pay attention to for your garden to thrive, bear your lots of produce, and reward later down the line. What you put in, you will get out! You are preparing a feast and food-store for your plants. You are placing within their sprouting and rooting tips all the sustenance they require. term, in one word, "available" plant food. You are

adding and feeding the soil with what the plants will need throughout their life cycle to give you the best harvest possible.

Cultivation and care is essential, making these foods available through airing and digging, ensuring optimal absorption, drainage and more and continued feeding or addition of nutrients from the outside to ensure optimal growth.

A "sandy" , grain-like texture is essential for good absorption of water, drainage and providing the optimal fertile 'ground' for your plants to survive, thrive and bear produce in and over time.

Not too dry, not too wet is a good rule of thumb. Not too much clay, not too much dry dust. Just enough sandy particles to provide a good growing environment. Darker rich soil is typically deemed more fertile and enriched. Take a very close and detailed look at the soil in the location you had selected. Does it look like somewhere where plants will thrive?

Ensure that there is a good clay/dust relationship in your soil and that it is well fed and cultivated, creating the perfect environment for your plants.

Watering and effective drainage, absorption rates are other factors that are often underestimated by the beginner gardener.

Some of this can be effectively addressed already by/with the choice of location itself. Digging around in the soil in your perfect or selected spot for your vegetable garden will hold some valuable clues as to what lies beneath the surface and some of the challenges you might already have regarding these aspects. Plants

need water to grow as well. Try to find a sub-surface that is a little 'harder' typically, different from the darker, cultivated upper layers or surface soil/ Avoid too much clay-like soils beneath where roots might rot and absorption will be poor. Again, a sloped garden seems to be the best solution.

Shape and size of your garden, with easy access to it from at least two sides can be extremely helpful to you. Another consideration is how close and reachable watering sources are. For the more adventurous amongst us and space no trouble, consider two garden patches, enabling rotation and a wide variety throughout the season.

Taking care of these consideration beforehand and prior to starting any serious planting will save you lots of agony down the line. Paying close attention to the little details will serve you well in the long run. The more you plan and prepare well, the better off you will be down the line.

B. Getting Ready

- **Seeds, Planting And Other Words Of Wisdom**
- **Essential Tools Of The Trade For Every Vegetable Patch And Home Garden**
- **Feeding The Soil And Other Preparatory Steps**

After picking your perfect location, soil-mixture, texture, drainage and feeding, tilling and toiling, it is now time to start picking what you will be seeding this patch with. Which vegetables are your favorites and where is the best place for them in your patch? For most the question of what exactly to plant, often ends up in front of the see-counter staring at packages and hand-picking a couple of personal preferences that stand out and/or that you really want.

Other considerations are rarely taken into account, before rows are dug and seeds are planted. Most just randomly opt for some over other vegetables and/or fruits, typically choosing tomatoes, potatoes, some kind of lettuce or greens, cucumbers, squash and beans.

Way back, catalogues held the key to offering available and picking from a list, reading through descriptions and products , sowing and planting and then waiting was the process to follow. There are however, ways to get the most from your vegetable gardening experience without entrusting it to mere random chance and luck. YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE, by heading some advice from the experts on (i) different types of seeds, for different soils, conditions, exposure and geographical locations, (ii) tools of the trade, (iii)

planting and transplanting small seedlings (iv) feeding the soil and caring for your plants.

This does not necessarily have to require more backbreaking hours of work. Not working harder, just smarter is what is required. Planning well is the key. Paying attention to basic, gardening and vegetable care fundamentals will make all the difference.

Some avid gardeners will propose some **vegetable gardening aides and guidelines** to help and assist you in making your veggie patch an extremely successful endeavor.

- adhering to a deliberate planting plan and schedule
- sticking to a so-called planting table
- using a check list
- tracking and keeping a garden record

All of the above, individually and collectively work together to increase your odds of success as a backyard. They do sound like a lot of work and somewhat complex for a task so simple. Yet, again, we will emphasize that taking some extra planning time beforehand and utilizing these tools to help you plant, care and harvest BETTER, adds some real success guaranteed, as opposed to leaving your veggie gardening results and outcome up to random chance! Keeping track of what is happening in and around your garden and having, a written record of it will go a long way in setting you up next year, saving you time and money! You will be working with some known facts as opposed to mere unknowns. These tools are highly customizable and you can tailor them to your personal

preference, need, requirements, and garden. A personalized solution and approach of sorts. This is the best way of gardening in your own backyard, making sense of what it is you have, what you need, what works, what does not and so on.

Figuring out what and when to plant is a good first step. You are the one setting your garden patch up for success, yielding vegetables and fruits or berries season-round. Make every gardening moment count, by working with, according to and sticking to a plan. It can be as simple or as complex as you might choose for it to be. In the end, it is all about the results, right? Would you then not want to everything within your power to make it deliver?

Plants will not all mature and yield their crop at the same time. You need to stagger and plan, even plant accordingly. Some weeks you might have ample supply and then for a month almost nothing. Try and ascertain for yourself, when you will need how much of what for your family meals and table and plant accordingly. Focus and try for a continuous supply throughout the season with some variety.

There are some great examples of these 'planning' and planting tools, schedules and other aids available in print and online.

Try and create on a piece of blank paper the layout, shape and size of your garden. Opt for a more rectangular shaped garden to enable planning and accessibility. Draw the rows and label what will be planted where. Rows placed and planned vertically is better than horizontal.

When you opt for what goes where, try to remember that you will need to plan for the actually cultivating, planting, access, weeding and watering. There are some veggie crops that will be with you for several years (e.g. rhubarb and asparagus). Keeping these closer to the ends are advisable. Seasonal veggies are next in line so to speak (parsnips, onions, carrots). Next will be the 'batch-growth' crops (peas, lettuce, and spinach).

Higher or taller crops like beans are typically best planted at the back. Move and plan from tallest in the back, to shortest in the front. This layout and mock-up of your garden will help you put some real thought and planning into your garden, more so than a haphazard planting all-over, that is difficult to get to and no more than some chaotic growth!

Planning should typically rather be done earlier and in due time, than rushing it when it is almost time to plant. The rule of thumb is that the more time you spend planning, the more you actually save yourself in hour's worth of labor in the garden itself, later on. Again, working smarter, not necessarily harder!

Having a short-list or checklist will help you plan for and think of everything you might need, including supplies and tools. You can easily list all the needs you anticipate or know of for every week, every month, throughout the season and ensure that you are prepared when they do arise.

MONTH**ACTIVITY**

(weather permitting) Late April/Early May Late May Early June	Sowing seeds inside cauliflower (on sods), muskmelon, watermelon, corn. seedbeds can be started too for celery, cabbage, lettuce. Onions, carrots, smooth peas, spinach, beets, chard, parsnip, turnip, and radish. Lettuce, cabbage (plants). Beans, corn, spinach, radish. kale, winter squash and pumpkin Beans, carrots, corn, cucumber, peas, summer spinach, summer lettuce, radish, egg-plant, pepper, tomato
Late June	Beans, corn, peas, turnip, summer lettuce, radish, late cabbage, and tomato plants.
Early July Late July	Beans, endive, kale, lettuce, radish, winter cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and celery plants. Beans, early corn, early peas, lettuce, radish.

MONTH**ACTIVITY**

Early August	peas, lettuce, radish.
Late August	Early peas, lettuce, radish in seedbed, forcing lettuce for fall in frames.
Early September	Lettuce, radish, spinach and onions for wintering over.

These are just suggestions for sample planting tables, schedules and recommendations. Weather permitting, conditions and locations will all be featured in as well, as will planning, preparing and caring for your garden. This is the beauty of having these tools at your disposal and actually using them. You are customizing your own solution to YOUR OWN BACKYARD VEGETABLE PATCH. You are hands-on and doing it, learning and discovering as you go along. You will reap the reward of the fruits/veggies of your labor and toil!

Tools of the Trade

Gardening and backyard vegetable patches are not to be left merely up to commercial and professionals! It is feasible and attainable for anyone and everyone! You can even get the family and kids involved.

Moving from concept to reality will require some stamina and hard work, but it will be worth its weight in produce when the crops start rolling in. You do not have to be on your knees, stooped the whole time, to participate in this rewarding activity. There are a variety of quality tools and aides available to you to assist you in these tasks.

They do not have to be backbreaking or tough on your joints and knees. Various modern tools of the trade enable and facilitate our gardening today, regardless of the size, shape or scope of your veggie garden. Garden tools are also pretty affordable and of robust manufacturing that will probably end up lasting you a lifetime, getting you good value for your investment over time. It saves time, effort and labor down the line too, if you pick the best and most appropriate tools for the different tasks. Making your job/tasks at hand easier is what this is all about. You are focused on results, NOT THE MECHANICS OF the process alone or at all for that matter. Building up your arsenal of garden tools over time is the best way to do it too, adding annually to grow your collection so to speak, will not leave a too big hole in your pocket.

Some tools have surprisingly also remained similar and true to their roots, origin and original intended purpose, withstanding time and change. The simplest tools can make the world of difference. Try to familiarize yourself with as much of the functionality of these tools that you can.

Whether the tools are for preparing the soil, feeding and cultivating the ground, planting the seed, or protecting crops from insects and disease, even picking and harvesting your crop, there are numerous utilities at your disposal, like the plans, schedules, checklists and records mentioned before, that can make your veggie gardening life a lot easier!

Here is an eclectic sampling of some of the tools a backyard gardener should not be without or at least consider for starters:

- **Garden Spades**

- typically used for digging, turning soil, breaking ground
- Also cultivating garden plots, borders, rows and beds.
- Function: break and move
- Selection: A wide variety of spades are available, different shapes and sizes
- What to look for: Good handle and stores easily

- **Spading-Fork**

- often used and preferred for it is slightly lighter
- Easily breaks up solid pieces of ground
- Also good for leveling or smoothing

- **Ordinary Gardening Fork**

- handling manure and gathering up trash, weeds,
- very common and popular tool to use
- Five or six-forked, slightly up-turned edges
- D-shaped handles are often more convenient and comfortable for garden use.

- **Preparation tools like the hoe, or hook, and the iron rake (even a hand-plow)**
 - wide, deep-bladed types are considered better
 - Most prefer the hook or prong-hoe for better functionality
 - Penetrate the soil and even sub-surfaces effectively
 - Try and find tools that are adjustable, and for different soils (even sod or other rough ground)
 - Can also be used to add some unique finishing touches, leveling off and fining the surface of the soil
 - An iron rake can have similar effects. Try and find and buy tools that are robust, less likely to get broken, and easier to use.
 - Mastering basic gardening skills like backward-and-forward movement of a rake will become almost like second nature to you in no time flat!

A seed-drill

- Enabling accurate and hassle-free planting
- marking seed rows, furrowing and dropping the seeds in all in one easy step
- ensuring the proper depth and distance with ease
- Covering and firming the surrounding soil

Garden Hoe

- Preferably, find one that is somewhat lighter and smaller, quicker and easier to handle.
- It saves time getting things done effectively and rounding things off professionally

Weeders

- look for tools that lessen the work and is easy on the knees and back (no stooping required)
- Depends on the soil and methods you choose work. Angled blades are best getting in small places
- Weeding regularly with the right tool is essential, catch them even before they start; do so in softer/wet soil when they are easier to pull up root and all!

Tools are helpful utilities if selected and used properly, also stored, cleaned and cared for appropriate. Kept maintained, bright and sharp, in good condition all round, will ensure hours of gardening pleasure and fun, as well as fruitful reward when the crops start rolling in.

Here are some **general care and maintenance tips for your garden tools** to keep them in tip-top shape, delivering and working at their utmost best for you:

- Wipe them clean
- Never put them away wet or with dirt on them
- Avoid rust and deterioration – store in cool and dry place
- Keep their edges sharp
- Have some additional spare handles in stock in case of accident
- Stay current and get some implement catalogues for new and trusted tools

When it comes to treating and caring for your garden there are tools to help you with this task as well.

They can be divided into **TWO MAIN TYPES**

(i) protecting plants (mechanical tools)

(ii) applicators (insecticides/fungicides)

- **Covered Frame**

- oftentimes a custom wooden box, (18" to 2' x 8' high)
- with some netting or even protective covering like glass or chicken wire)
- Retains heat, moisture and protects the plants from cold or extreme heat
- Keeping plants safe early in the starter phases are very important

- **Stiff, Tin, Cardboard Or Tar Paper Collars**

- inches high
- placed around the stem
- penetrates an inch or so into the soil
- positioning, support and protection

- **Powder Gun Or Hand-Power, Compressed-Air Sprayers**

applying poison powder or wet sprays,

different nozzles and misters

non-clog and automatic types are seen as more desirable

For larger gardens, consider a barrel pump and extension rods for fruit-trees or vines for example.

Look for tools that preferably throw a continuous stream or spray larger capacity (less trips to refill)

Brass withstands the chemicals better

Harvesters

loosening root-type veggies like onions, beets, turnips

cutting spinach, carrots, parsnips or deeply rooted veggies might require a puller with some leverage to not strain or hurt your back.

Fruit-pickers with long handles are best for orchards and larger trees.

Garden care Utilities like pruning knives and a pair of pruning shears

Plant supports

such as stakes, trellises, wires, and more

enables cultivation and easy access, ,as well as beautification and that professional look added to your garden

Ask and answer yourself when it comes to the tools you opt to use in your garden:

- What types are available?
- How much does it cost?
- What are its features, strengths, shortcomings?
- Look for comfort and ease of use, no strain.
- How to care and maintain the tools best.

Feeding the Soil

Knowing which manure and fertilizers to use is critical for the health and success of your vegetable patch and backyard produce garden.

Most of the plant nutrients your veggies need will come from the soil. That much we have learned so far. It does not fall from the sky and not in thin air! Sometimes we fail to realize the importance of this aspect of our gardening and wonder why our crop yield is low, plants die or wither, do not thrive! WITHOUT NUTRIENTS/FOOD PLANTS WILL NOT GROW – THEY WILL DIE!

Sounds simple and straight forward, but we forget that it matters what and how much is available to these plants for their optimal growth. Rich soil under-root and underfoot is essential! There are plant foods that are readily available in the soil that can easily be absorbed and then there are those that have to undergo some natural degradation and breakdown for them to be useful, like compost elements and plant materials for example.

You need to protect your plants for being under-nourished and not having enough of one or the other food-source at their disposal and ready absorption.

Mostly water-soluble, these nutrients are carried and absorbed by the roots. Food , sun and water are all part of the mix that plants need, in moderation, frequently and consistently to grow, thrive and bear fruit! Absorbing these chemicals from the ground and surrounding soil is critical for growth. We have to place these at the plants' ready disposal. If it is not present in the soil or patch we are working/planting in, we need to add, cultivate and work it in from the

outside. It is up to us vegetable gardeners to produce the optimal conditions, including exposure, location, soil, food and water for our plants to thrive.

Most gardeners will tell you that there are THREE BASIC COMPONENTS that have to be present for plants to grow, thrive and 'feed'. They are

- (i) nitrogen,
- (ii) phosphoric acid, and
- (iii) potash.

Most of our gardens will have trace elements and certain amounts of all three of these in varying concentrations and relations. Yet, there are in forms that are not easily and readily available or absorbed easily by plants. For any successful garden, you might have to add these to the soil, in order to create the optimal growing environment that you want and your plants demand and deserve.

Modern products make this process extremely easy:

There are lots containing all three in varying proportions depending on your needs and requirements

What is already in the ground, is pretty much an unknown and unreliable as a source of sustenance

Different plants have different needs

Effectively 'feeding the soil' from the outside , to what plants really need, is oftentimes referred to as 'manuring' or soil-enrichment

Putting the right nutrients in place and within the plants' easy reach, close to the roots, watering and weeding regularly is the best that you

can do. They will take all that they need from the soil. You need to have all three elements to promote growth. Also, remember as a general rule of thumb, that too much of a good thing is not necessarily good! Researching and applying these as needed are critical to ensure growth and crop yield.

FAST FACT: Substances containing available plant food applied to the soil are of extreme importance for the backyard gardener.

NOTE: SOMETIMES MANURE AND FERTILIZER ARE USED INTERCHANGEABLY IN LITERATURE AND OTHER SOURCES!

TWO TYPES OF SOIL FEED

Organic

Natural elements

Manure

Decayed plant material

Vegetable matter

Non-organic

Potash

Salts

phosphoric rock

mixed fertilizers

Organic soil feeds are more popular as they add not only to the texture and richness of the soil, creating an optimal growth environment, plants seem to 'naturally' take to them somewhat better and thrive more.

Fertilizer sometimes have more plant food, but add very little enhancement to the soil or stimulates more natural growth than the organic soil feeds.

Most gardens take between 60-90 days to successfully yield and run. This implies that immediate feeding is required and necessary. The more organically broken down your feed soil is, the better your plants and vegetables will fare.

For home gardeners, you can also fall back on your own garden yields for feeding your soil. Some examples of plant materials may include fallen leaves, grass clippings, vegetable tops and roots, green weeds, garbage, house slops, dish water, chip dirt from the wood-pile, shavings—any thing that will rot away and home-made compost. Decomposition is a natural process and keeping it covered, turning it ever so often, even if you are buying, it will do the trick and give your plants the best nutrition needed.

You can also use the current growth and veggies and plow them under to feed the soil for next season. You do not have to merely depend on commercially available fertilizers and chemicals. There are natural alternatives that you can quite easily take advantage of as a backyard gardener, while doing your part for the environment!

For larger gardens using under-plowing of crops like rye, field corn, field peas and crimson clover are often used to feed the soil.

When using **commercial fertilizers** like most of us will inevitably have to do, we need to rely on adding to the available plant foods already in the soil. We need to give the plants what they need in order to live, grow, thrive and yield some crops. The best of both worlds so to speak to optimize the chances of a successful vegetable crop throughout the season.

Balanced amounts of the three elements nitrogen, phosphoric acid or potash are available in a variety of 'mixes'. You can buy them bagged or in bulk.

Here is a sampling of some of the nutrients and mixtures available to you in the market to feed the soil:

- For quick-grow results try NITRATE OF SODA, rich in nitrogen stimulating plant growth in short time-frames, for high yield garden crops. Should be handles with care and following instructions carefully for application.
- LIME additions (every 3-5 yrs add to your soil for optimal yield)
- MURIATE and SULPHATE OF POTASH mixtures are often used for garden crops
- Nitrogen-rich sources (COTTON-SEED MEAL) feed and spread well, with guaranteed results in a short-time-frame
- Phosphate sources (GROUND BONE) lasts and are quite popular

Most commonly used and freely available from retailers, home garden centers and niche landscapers, gardening specialists are the mixture fertilizers. As a backyard gardener you have no choice as to use and believe the claims that are on the bag, the product that is in the bag, for what it is, taken at face value. Read the label and pick the one that is most suitable for your needs and requirements. You will be well advised to buy the brand from which you will apparently get the greatest and value, yielding crops throughout the season!

For garden crops, the mixed fertilizer you use should contain (about):

Additional readings on fertilizers and even asking an expert or two, might help you get ahead of your game and figure out how best to apply and utilize these in your own garden.

If you do opt for the more natural, organic solutions and manure, ensure that you pick a product that is well decomposed and worked through and from grain-fed animals. You can also choose to supplement with fertilizer. Most of these feeding options are available, but check in your local area and ask around for what might be the best (local growers or farmers will be able to tell you).

Preparing The Soil

You are using typically a smaller, dedicated space for your vegetable growing and cultivating. Knowing what to feed and place within the plants' reach is only half the battle. How to get it to them properly for optimal absorption and nutrient value, is also paramount.

You can chemically and mechanically alter the soil and surroundings your plants will be growing and thriving in. Breaking up clumps, weeding, watering, airing, draining and more are all important aspects and basic skills that all vegetable gardeners should have.

Here are some soil characteristics that will contribute positively to stimulating plant growth:

- Supply plants with key THREE ingredients
- Holding and dispersing moisture, sufficient drainage

- Water-soluble foods have to be accessible and available for plant roots to absorb them effectively
- How much food is present in the soil
- What is the physical condition of the soil – cultivating it will help
- You will need to add nutrients to any type of soil, regardless of what is present or not

Types of soils that are commonly found and encountered by backyard vegetable gardeners:

- **Rocky soils**

- Very typical and common in most backyards, residential, urban areas
- Ground has suffered lots of significant decomposition by air, moisture and frost.
- They are mostly gravel-like, sandy or even clay-like type of soils.

- **Clay Soils**

- stiff, wet, heavy and usually “cold.”
- Typically holds a lot of water and not very suitable for vegetable gardening
- They often result in gardens yielding crops late and quite hard to weed, feed and handle in general.
- Adding texture and nutrients to it can help you create the optimal growing environment

- Some produce are better suited to this type of soil (celery for example)
- Drainage is of utmost important for this type of soil
- It will result in a higher yielding garden.
- Breaking it up thoroughly will also help
- Altering the soil texture by adding coarse vegetable manures, large quantities of stable, manures, even ashes, chips, sawdust, sand, will help you cultivate it better.
- Holds all additions well for optimal absorption, even if it does take longer to yield crops.

▪ **Sandy Soil**

- Made up mostly of sands - the opposite of clay soil mentioned above Keeping it as well compacted as possible will be your priority. Rolling it flat is recommended
- Fertilize, Plow, sow/plant immediately to make the most of this type of growing environment for vegetables.
- Add some clay soil or manure to give it more texture and better drainage, or opt for adding lime or gypsum, which will also add some bulk and moisture retention.
- Will yield early and quick results/crops
- Perfectly suite to growing melons, cucumbers, beans and some others homegrown favorites.

▪ **Gravelly Soil**

- The least desirable for vegetable gardens
- Not a lot of plant food and nutrients

The ideal garden and growing environment is rich, cultivated, fine and rich, recognizable as 'fertile' and welcoming to plant life. Absorption and drainage in perfect balance. It does not clog, clump or pack down; easy to handle (both mechanical and chemically balanced) well supplied with all the organic materials and nutrients it needs to create a great space for plants to grow, thrive and yield great crops.

Here is how to make the most of preparing your soil for your vegetable gardening needs:

- Whether you are plowing or digging it up by hand, spend the time preparing and cultivating the ground as best you can for the optimal results.
- You can opt for protection, like erecting a barrier, living hedge or a fence of sorts. Hand-plows, spring-tooth and spike-tooth cultivators, work exceptionally well in small spaces.
- Dig deeply and well into the sub-strata of the ground and soil to ascertain the type and condition, feeding requirements and cultivation priorities.
- It might be some of the hardest work you will be doing in your garden initially and as you set up, but it will be worth the effort later on.

Plowing beginning in the spring is advisable. Chemicals and additions alone will not do it. Mechanical cultivation is key as well. You need both! Manure and fertilizer, soil feeding and toiling, tilling is necessary, working air and nutrients into it, creating a perfect growing environment, welcoming plant life and growth, is what you are after. This is your goal and purpose.

Harrowing and breaking up the soil is important too. Break up large clumps and lumps, even getting a roller and putting some of the other tools in your arsenal to good use to optimize your soil are key.

Fining, finishing and smoothing is a great way of preparing seed beds for planting. You can use an iron rake or harrow to do so.

Soil has to be fine and aired, lightweight and easy to manipulate.

Here are just some of the ways your vegetable garden will benefit from these preparatory stages and steps of feeding and cultivating:

- Availability and accessibility of plant foods in the soil available for absorption and use by plant roots
- Stimulated deep rooting and growth of quality plants that are stronger
- Water retention, drainage and absorption are improved significantly
- Storing and locking in nutrients and necessary elements for growth as opposed to it running off or damming up

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THESE IMPORTANT FIRST AND PREPARATORY STEPS! They might take longer and ask for more work, BUT if you take the time and effort to prepare your garden deeply, thoroughly, carefully, in addition to making it rich, you will benefit from higher yielding crops and better success at growing backyard vegetables.

C. Getting Started

- **Seedlings And Plants**
- **The Act, Secrets And Art Of Planting**
- **Taking Care Of Vegetables**
- **How Vegetables Are Plants With A Difference Requiring Special Attention**

From garden to table, that is the dream and purpose here. Going from seed to plant, yielding fruits or crops, the process you are enabling through your activities, energies and efforts what stands in the center of focus. Sometimes knowing and seeing your goal clearly also helps you with what needs to get done in order to succeed.

Most of the activities up to this point can easily be put into the categories of planning and preparation. Now the actually ACTION will follow, dealing with seeds, plants and crops galore in your OWN BACKYARD VEGETABLE GARDEN!

Starting with and from seeds are the best way to learn about the plants and veggies themselves, their needs and requirements and how you can best addressing it.

- Seeds have to be of good quality to give plants a fighting chance
- Good stock and brand name seed are highly recommended
- Strong and gathered from healthy specimens
- Freshly collected
- Mail-order is best

- Do not sacrifice quality to save a couple of bucks for cheap seeds.
- Grow and test them, until you find the most reliable ones, or ask around. Trust results and word of mouth, tested and proven seed always provide you with the better options and higher crop yields
- Plants started indoors in flat trays can do really well if properly cared for from the starts.
- All can be started covered under glass and do some great growing even before they make their way into the garden and eventually onto your table!
- Transplanting these young plants require quite the art and taking extra care to ensure the roots take well and the setting is firm and secure will be paramount.
- You can also buy vegetable plants fro retailers and gardening centers to give you a head start. Growing them yourself however is much more rewarding. Depending on how practical and hands-on you want to be in this endeavor.
- For early starts to the garden head indoors. Gardeners typically opt for either hotbeds or cold frames. Daily attention is more important than the precise/exact medium they are being planted and housed in!
- Heating, watering and ventilation all matter in giving these plants a good start.
- Flat-trays are the most commonly used method for starting the germination process.

Build a frame and prepare the soil like you would for any other gardening activity. Planning and preparation does matter. Soil has to be rich, light, managed and easily workable.

Growing plants with certainty and confidence requires all these preparatory steps in order to guarantee successful results and outcome.

Seed can be sown directly into the soil or plants can be started in flats. For planting of seeds in flat trays, do not use manure, giving your plants a robust start.

Seeding has to be done evenly and thick to ensure best chance for optimal growth.

Some care tips for seeding and planting:

VENTILATION: Airing it ever so often, lifting corners is a great way to get oxygen to the plants and enable growth

WATERING: Soil have to be moistened but only when fairly dry— Thorough watering is essential at this point, as much as it will take comfortably, without leaving standing water. Mornings are better.

TRANSPLANTING: When ready, big enough, they have to be moved to bigger containers or into the soil (weather permitting of course). Keep roots intact and avoid them breaking or damaging in any way. This is the lifeline of your plant. Wet soil is easier to work with during this process, so water it prior (1 day before) attempting to move the seedlings and young plants-in-the-making!

Be careful in handling stems and leaves and do not bend.

Temperature and water are the two biggest determining factors, as are the soil and nutrients the plants can draw upon to grow and thrive. Misting also works. Taking them out for a couple of hours a

day prior to planting them outside permanently will help them transition and adjust better.

Outside seedbeds require the same preparations and care, as well as even seeding, with ample space left between plants, especially the leafy greens. April/May (depending on where you live and weather conditions) is great planting and transplanting months!

Whether seeding indoors or outdoors, you want to have full rows with optimal growth and quality crop yield. Getting off to a good start, using quality seed and process, practice and technique, some special care watering and planting, can make all the difference.

Moisture and warmth is extremely important for these phases of germination and early growth. Attention to watering and temperature, soil conditions are essential for success. Covering and protecting are just some ways of dealing with these challenges.

Typically, there are THREE processes of planting of seeds:

- Drilling with holes and spaces in-between
- Hilling
- Rows of seeds (fixed distances)

Hand-sown or tool-enabled, there is only ONE priority, evenly done, at the right depth, covered well and correctly spaced for the varieties and types of veggie/fruit you are planting.

Soil preparation and a freshly prepared bed for seeding and planting are BOTH pre-requisites for a successful process and result!

Soil has to be moist and wet for easy handling and optimal rooting, securing planting.

How deep to plant it will depend on the type, varieties, location and weather involved.

Early, spring plantings seem to be more successful, as soon as the risk or frost is gone, past, no longer a threat.

Covering and protecting the early seedlings and germinating plants increase their odds of/for optimal growth.

Avoid the soil drying out too much and cracking in the soil.

Carefully transplanting and ensuring that there is enough spacing between plants will also give them room to expand and grow accordingly and appropriately.

Cultivation and regular monitoring in the early stages will be your calling, role, task and commission to ensure they survive and thrive, past their initial early stages of growth.

Weeding, stimulating plant growth, airing and conserving moisture and nutrients are all important parts of this process.

Breaking up the soil and regular feeding and watering can only help increase your odds for success.

Constant on-going care will be required, but as mentioned earlier, working smarter, using the right tools of the trade, can all make quite the difference for all these tasks at hand.

Here are some additional tips to ensure the tasks at hand do not overwhelm or overtake you:

- Work when the soil is soft and moist after rain for example or watering Before weeding use a hoe to cultivate and eye the weeds that have to be removed.
- Break up the soil properly
- Hand-weeding is the safest until you get comfortable with some of the more advanced tools
- Take exceptional care not to pull out the seedlings with the weeds!
- Drawing up the soil, then leveling again, while cultivating on both sides of the stem, airs and protects the young growing plants as well, getting nutrients where they belong.
- Rotating and alternating veggies, types and varieties are all great ways of giving soil a 'rest' and providing the different plants with what they need.

D. General Rules of Thumb and Special Veggie Gardening Tips

- **Which Garden Vegetables To Plant And Why**
- **When To Pick And What To Do With Vegetables From Your Garden**
- **Fruits And Other Berries In Your Backyard**

Which Garden Vegetables To Plant And Why

When contemplating what and why, where and when to plant, there are THREE classes of fruit and veggies to consider. They are:

- Root crops (carrots, potatoes, beets)
- Leaf-type veggies (lettuce, cabbage, spinach)
- Fruits and Berries (tomatoes, melons)

There are different considerations for each of these. We will look briefly at some characteristics and requirements of/for each:

<u>Root veggies</u>	<u>Leaf-type veggies</u>	<u>Fruits</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Beet▪ Carrot▪ Kohlrabi▪ Leek▪ Onion▪ Parsnip▪ Potato▪ Salsify▪ Turnip	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Asparagus▪ Brussels Sprouts▪ Cabbage▪ Cauliflower▪ Celery▪ Endive▪ Kale▪ Lettuce▪ Parsley▪ Rhubarb▪ Spinach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Bean, dwarf▪ Bean, pole▪ Corn▪ Peas▪ Cucumber▪ Egg-plant▪ Melon, musk▪ Melon, water▪ Okra▪ Pepper▪ Pumpkins▪ Squash▪ Tomato

General planting tips for root vegetables would include:

- Typically these seeds are best sown in April
- 12-18" apart from one another
- Rich and fine soil is a requirement for optimal growing environments
- Hand-weeding is quite common and these patches of your vegetable garden will need cleaning and frequent cultivation
- Some will recommend a top dressing of nitrate of soda
- Light soil, started under glass and inside, early will give them a better fighting chance.
- For later crops sow beets and carrots for example in June
- Leeks are best started in seedbed, indoors, in April. For when moving or transplanting outside, cardboard collars may be used for support
- Onions are best sowed directly into the soil, not started in flat trays.
- Parsnips want deep, rich soil and are typically slow germinators and do best in a fine seedbed.
- Potatoes are best planted in early March in sandy, well-drained soil
- Radishes and turnips are robust and need rich, good soil, but are typically good and easy growers too.

General planting tips for leaf-type vegetables:

- Characterized by stalks or flower-heads mostly

- Rapid growth, sown directly into a flat, started indoors, and later transplanted, they are good growers, from garden to table with ease.
- They need lots of nitrogen permanent positions. Manure is considered good soil feed for all cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce and sprouts.
- Hilling them up, helps to protect, hand weeding required.
- Dangers and enemies of these plants will include the flea beetle, cabbageworm, cabbage-maggot (root) and "club-root". Reading up on how best to battle these critters and infestations are recommended.
- Asparagus is easy to grow and experiment with in early spring with best-draining, lift soil required for optimal growing environment.
- Broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cabbage are all easily grown at home, started from seed, inside do very well.
- Lettuce and celery are planted level, well-drained soil, kept moist. Seeds are sown and started indoors late February, early May and transplanting should be done with the utmost care. Cutting back the roots and thinning may be required too.
- Mushrooms, parsley and spinach are other popular starters for young and novice gardeners that grow easily.

General planting tips for fruit-type 'vegetables':

- Soil should not be too rich and warm weather, sun exposure makes them do better.
- Wait until all risk of frost has passed before considering planting Peas and early beans can be done earlier

- They need lots of room to spread out and distances between plants should be ample.
- Light and fine sandy soil required with some organic-naturally manure worked into the surrounding soil, close to roots, make a great combination recipe for results and success.
- Hills and slopes enable their growth and ensure good crop yield
- Insects are notorious for these, start working on your strategy early. Some examples of the dangers and infestations are:
 - striped beetle
 - the borer
 - the flat, black “stink-bug”

As becomes clear pretty quickly, paying special care to the types, planting and care of the particular sub-class and type of veggies/fruits that you are planting can make all the difference in the world.

Increase your odds of good crop yield and a thriving garden, by studying their nature, needs, dangers, enemies and maintenance closely and you will have lots to teach and pass on from season to season and to others venturing down this path as well.

Planning and preparation, careful planting, feeding and cultivating all work together to get your garden in tip-top shape, rewarding you with crops that exceed your expectations.

When To Pick And What To Do With Vegetables From Your Garden

For many a backyard garden there are lots of surplus vegetables and fruits that can result, especially if you have a good season and crop yields that exceed your expectation.

Knowing when to pick , pack, store and preserve them can go a long way in keeping the bounty giving way into the winter months! A cooler-room in the basement can help you store vegetables as well. For rot/waste composting or burying it in the ground are also viable options. Feeding the soil and replenishing lost nutrients are always good practises.

Ensure that it is in a spot where there is sufficient drainage. Pick the size, shape, depth and width cover with straw, mulch, best done in the fall-season as things start winding down in the vegetable garden outside.

Secrets and Tips for storing vegetables:

- Ensure that the space is clean and dry
- Fruits/vegetables must not be bruised or damaged, with no visible signs of rot or decay – also watch for mold or sprouting
- Temperature should be regulated, even and steady (33-38 degrees) with no fluctuations
- Ventilation and smell-control (lime or whitewash) ensured
- No rodents or other pests

Here are some more great suggestions, past jams, jellies, pickling and freezing:

- Canning or preserving are also always viable options to consider to make your produce and crop last way into the winter.
- Dried beans are excellent in soups and stews place, dry and/or shell them
- Beets can be buried and stored in dry sand indoors
- Best frozen, Brussels sprouts can easily last until around December. Store onions in barrels, dry and ventilated space best
- Parsley can be kept in a flower or window-sill planter in a sunny window
- Parsnips can be left in the ground. Potatoes are typically stored in a cool, dry cellar when taken out. Light will make them bitter. Tomatoes – place on window sill to ripen.

Other gardening priorities in the 'quiet seasons'

- Weeding should remain a priority for the vegetable gardener well into the fall and winter. Weeds and seeds all continue their lifecycles, so do not make your spring even harder on yourself!
- Keep your garden clean and neat at all times, to avoid making more and unnecessary work for yourself.

- Composting can be a great way to feed your garden. Cover and feed your soil before 'putting it to bed for the season' so to speak.
- Pack away all garden tools, remove and cover stakes, store in dry place. Burn all weeds (ensure a permit is not required and if so, get one prior to lighting up!)
- Winter is a time for reflection and starting the cycle all over again. Learn from mistakes and successes and implement these in your plans for the following season!

Fruits and Other Berries in Your Backyard

Think of the various pleasures and tastes that small fruits and berries have to offer and bring to you. They do not take up a lot of room in the garden and can form part of your repertoire for yourself, family and friends to partake, admire and enjoy!

Cultivation is still extremely important, as it soil feeding, preparation and all other steps associated and discussed to this point for vegetables.

Getting them started is often the biggest challenge and no expertise or specialist gardening knowledge or skills are required to grow berries and fruits.

Some of the most popular fruits might include: easy growers like the strawberry, the blackberry, dewberry and raspberry, for the more adventurous gardeners amongst us, there is also the currant, gooseberry and grape.

You might have varying success with these, at first, but these days, you can buy from the field plants that are up to 2 yrs old and settled and established pretty well to increase your odds of success.

How deep, where and the care of the plants seem to take precedence and concern for most gardeners contemplating these as part of their plantings and offerings.

Two requirements for fruit and berries are rich soil that drains well. Potash, fertilizer or manure can be used to feed the plants.

Transplanting them and ensuring good root depth and securing them properly are all key to their optimal growth. Some sunny exposure is recommended.

There are TWO basic ways to plant strawberries for example if you are setting out with something easier in this category.

- (i) They can be planted directly in the soil, allowed to root
- (ii) They can also be planted in containers or layered in pots

When the risk of frost has passed, early spring plantings are best and most successful. A well-prepared planting or transplanting environment is essential.

Most gardeners will tell you that there are THREE possible ways to get the most from fruit and berry planting

- hilly slope location in single rows or beddings with 3-4 rows (1-2 ft apart, with every plant kept separately)
- matted row with plants placed in single rows, runners set in the bed about 1 ft apart.
- A pot-layering system where a good annual crop is almost secured and guaranteed with this method. Therefore, it is very popular indeed. Some plants are selected to be 'runners' . in-between the space occupied by these berries and fruits can be utilized by some other veggies, like lettuce for example.

Tips for growing berries successfully

- Keep it clean and weed free
- Cut off all runner and allow the core to grow strong and deliver the best.
- Air and cultivate often
- Winter-mulching is recommended
- Dangers include white-grub, cut-worm and rust
- Pay attention to the leaves as the first telltale signs will often be visible here.

There are lots of types to choose from to plant when you want to experiment with strawberries specifically. Here are some examples of varieties available in the market today:

Early Season : Michel's Early, Haverland, Climax;
Mid-season: Bubach No. 5, Brandywine, Marshall, Nic.
Ohmer, Wm. Belt, Glen Mary, Sharpless;
Late Season: Gandy, Sample, Lester Lovett.

For most of the other berry varieties, including blackberry, dewberry and raspberry, the processes and care are pretty much the same.

Here are some growing tips for fruits and berries that can make all the difference for your crop of backyard fruits:

- Well-tilled soil, rich and cultivated is a pre-requisite.
- Early spring planting is best.
- Plant and set the plants 3 to 6 feet apart
- Secure and plant firmly in the soil, so roots can take
- Clean and weed frequently
- soil mulch and water retention is very important to give the plants a fighting chance, keeping the roots cool and the plants fed and hydrated essential for optimal growth
- Cultivation should give plants a great start.
- Stakes can be used as support (also canes and string wire)
- Pruning has a role to play to optimize the yield and crop from season to season. (You will be well served to read up a little more about this topic)
- Winter protection and minimized exposure is very important in colder areas
- Mulch can and must be removed in/by early spring.

Blackberries

- Staking and pruning are the most important aspects involved in successfully growing and cultivating this fruit.
- Good clearances between these plants are essential to allow room to grow.
- Supports can be used to establish them early on.
- A little dry-type soil is considered ideal for this fruit
- Pruned back to about four feet in the spring will yield better crops

There are a couple of dangers/things to watch out for when growing blackberries (again looking at the leaves and condition of the plant, for telltale signs and signals of problems):

- (i) rust or blight
- (ii) the bush borer
- (iii) bramble flea-louse

NOTE: In all these infestations getting rid of the plants and actually burning them is the only way to get rid of it effectively and not put the rest of your garden or plants at risk.

TYPES OF BLACKBERRIES

Here are some of the examples of early season blackberries that are quite popular for backyard gardeners: Early King, Early Harvest, Wilson Junior, Kittatinny, Rathburn, Snyder, Erie varieties. Even dewberries (a special kind of blackberry).

Raspberries

There are both black and red types available of this delicious fruit. Staking, supporting and pruning, cultivating and regular watering are all considered essential for their best care.

Adequate spacing when planting them is required to encourage spread and growth. Clay-type soils do best for these fruits/berries.

Care should be taken against pests and infestations, like:

- (i) orange rust
- (ii) cutworm; and
- (iii) borer beetle

NOTE: In all these infestations getting rid of the plants and actually burning them is the only way to get rid of it effectively and not put the rest of your garden or plants at risk.

TYPES OF RASPBERRIES

- Black-type varieties: Gregg, McCormick, Munger, Cumberland, Columbian, Palmer (very early), and Eureka (late)
- Red-type varieties: Cuthbert, Cardinal (new), Turner, Reliance, The King (extra early), Loudon (late)
- Yellow-type varieties: Golden Queen

Fruits Of The Vine: Grapes

- They are typically very easy to grow in rich soil.
- Ensuring proper drainage is important
- Supports and pruning again are paramount for bearing large crops of fruit.
- 1-2 year old plants will typically fare a little better.
- Early spring planting is recommended
- Firm planting and rooting is essential
- Training or climbing the vines until they reach maturity can affect the yield as well. number of bunches it can properly mature

Grapes take time, patience and persistence to perfect over time. Reading and experimenting are great ways to hone your skills with this precious fruit.

There are various ways to support the grape vines and enable climbing, trellises, arbors, walls—almost anything may be used.

Problems and infestations might include black rot , which again will have you eliminating the whole plant to get rid of it effectively.

For novices and seasoned veterans, the pleasure and treasure of having 'fruits' (pardon the pun) of their labor, thriving and to be enjoyed, outweighs the input and efforts to get it off the ground.

E. Final Thoughts For The Green Thumbed!

Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned gardener, always pay close attention to the small details you might not consider to be important, for guaranteed they might just make the difference. Plan and prepare, execute and care for your vegetable garden and you will NOT be disappointed.

Reading and studying gardening books might also help as you get started out, setting up your vegetable patch in your own backyard. Get familiar with practice and problems, solutions that you might encounter. The more you learn, the less mistakes and wasted, futile efforts along the way (which can always happen).

Gardening holds its interest and reward for different people for a variety of different reasons. Every crop and season can be strikingly different that keeps us coming back for more!

You can keep on trying new things, discovering truths and wisdom you did not know before. You can hone and harness your skills to your heart's content. You might not even succeed right away, but do not walk away discouraged or disillusioned – keep on trying, learning as you go along.

I hope that some practical words of backyard vegetable gardening wisdom have made its way onto these pages and into your mind and heart. Best of luck with your season and crops ahead!