



# CHEAT SHEET: PLANNING YOUR KITCHEN GARDEN

Set yourself up for success

- Top off your bed with fresh organic compost. Replenishes nutrients, helps with water retention and improves drainage. Also encourages healthy soil life
- Additional ways to feed your soil: earthworm castings + liquid fish fertilizer
- Healthy soil = healthy plants = less pests and disease
- Avoid synthetic fertilizers
- Trellises - plan for proper, strong support for your biggest + heaviest plants including peppers, eggplant and especially tomatoes. Cages can support eggplant and bush tomatoes. Indeterminate, or vining tomatoes, need larger more sturdy support.
- Watering - have a plan for regular watering. Veggie gardens on average need an inch per week, but more in extreme weather. Always water at the ROOTS not the leaves. Seeds and transplants need consistent watering every day (for seeds) or two (transplants) at first.

Plant with the seasons

Certain plants prefer certain seasons or temperatures: cold, cool, warm and hot

- Average last frost date vs Mother's Day planting date
- Cool season: March through May (chance of frost)
- Warm season: May through October (zero chance of frost)
- Cool season: October through December (chance of frost)
- Cold season: January/February (guaranteed frost)

Cool season crops

spinach, arugula, radishes, cilantro, peas, lettuces, beets, carrots, kale, swiss chard, broccoli, cauliflower, pansies, violas

Warm season crops

Tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cucumbers, bush beans, pole beans, zucchini, arugula, heat tolerant lettuces, basil, zinnias, cosmos

Intensive planting / square foot gardening

- Maximizes space in your bed which offers so many benefits: more production, less exposed soil means better nutrient and moisture retention, more diversity in your bed confuses pests, invites pollinators, more balanced eco system
- Each plant gets the space it needs, but no more. Not crowding the bed with seedlings, but planting with the mature size of the plant in mind.
- Include plenty of herbs and flowers interplanted with your veggies in order to diversify your garden, help the plants grow with each other, attract beneficial insects and help keep pests to a minimum.



# CHEAT SHEET: PLANNING YOUR KITCHEN GARDEN

## Planting considerations

- Direct sow vs transplant – some seeds prefer to be direct sown in place, others benefit from starting indoors. Others can go either way
  - Direct sow quick growing or root sensitive plants: root vegetables (radishes, carrots, beets) and veggies that don't like to be transplanted (beans + legumes including snap/snow peas and beans; spinach, cucumber and zucchini)
  - Transplant: larger plants that need a head start indoors (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant)
  - Either way: lettuces, annual flowers, annual herbs (basil)
- Think about how many plants you want – multiple plants may be better by seed vs just planting one of a kind may be better by transplant
- Look for disease resistant, space-saving or container varieties (especially for plants that get large)
- Top cool season seeds: arugula, spinach, mixed lettuce blends, radishes, snap peas
- Top warm season seeds: bush beans, cucumber, zucchini, arugula, heat tolerant lettuce blends
- Space vs reward
  - multi-harvest plants vs one and done
- Succession planting – planting faster maturing crops in “rounds” vs planting everything at once. Many benefits:
  - gives you a more continuous harvest vs. everything maturing at once. Great for lettuces, radishes, bush beans, cucumbers + zucchini
  - helps with pest issues + pest control
  - prevents bare soil = better moisture retention and fewer weeds

## Pest Control

- Not all bugs are bad; pests are inevitable. The goal is a tolerable level of pests, not none.
- Each plant hosts only a handful of pests. Proper ID is critical. Use 2+ characteristics when searching online, including host plant that's affected + appearance of pest, type of damage, time of year to help indicate pest's lifecycle
- Plant varieties that are bred for or known for certain pest or disease resistance
- Physical barriers (mesh, cloches, dollar store mesh garbage cans), mechanical control (monitoring, handpicking, soapy water cup, painters tape for egg collection, water spray)
- Companion planting + trap cropping (french marigolds, calendula, basil, dill, alliums, nasturtiums)
- Organic sprays as a last resort