

# Garden Care & Best Practices

## *Introduction to Vegetable Gardening – Part 3*

### CARING FOR YOUR VEGETABLES

- **Visit regularly** – Create a schedule and plan to visit more often during hot and dry times
- **Water as needed** – Water deeply when needed and focus on the roots of the plants
- **Keep soil covered** – A simple mulch of straw or dried leaves will keep weeds down, slow water evaporation, and control fungus & bacteria spread; avoid using wood chips
- **Check for plant damage & pests** – Browned or yellowed leaves, spots, holes, or tears in leaves, and cracked, soft, or holey fruit can indicate a problem
- **Remove damaged or dead plant material** – Keep the garden tidy to prevent spreading disease and to make it easier to harvest
- **Harvest ripe vegetables** – Pick vegetables as they ripen for the best flavor and nutrition; read the seed packet to know what to look for and when to harvest
- **Take notes** – Keep a record to know what you did and what you want to try in the future

### PEST CONTROL

- Make sure you know what the problem is before trying to solve it.
- Use the Extension websites or Ramsey County Diagnostic Clinic.
- Use **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** methods as a less invasive solution before researching pesticide options.
  - Fences, row covers, and mulch can reduce damage from animal, insect, and fungal/bacterial pests.
  - If you use a pesticide, **READ THE LABEL** and follow **ALL** instructions for protection, preparation, use, storage & disposal.

### LEARN MORE WITH THESE RESOURCES

- ❖ **University of MN Extension Program** [www.extension.umn.edu/garden/yard-garden](http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/yard-garden)
- ❖ **Ask An Expert** <http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/ask/>
- ❖ **Extension Soil Testing Laboratory** <http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu/>
- ❖ **Ramsey County Yard Waste Sites** <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/recycling-waste/collection-sites/yard-waste>
- ❖ **Vegetable Gardener's Bible**, book by Edward Smith
- ❖ **Square Foot Gardening**, book by Mel Bartholomew
- ❖ **Year-Round Vegetable Gardener**, book by Niki Jabbour
- ❖ **Bountiful Container**, book by Maggie Stuckey & Rose Marie Nichols McGee

**CLASS NOTES**

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**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

How will I remember to care for my garden?

What will I do if there are pests or problems?

What parts of gardening will challenge me the most? How will I overcome these?

How will I use my vegetables?