

Preparing Your Garden

Introduction to Vegetable Gardening – Part 1

MAKING A GARDEN GROW

- **Sun** – Sunlight helps the plant turn air, water, and nutrients into growth. Most vegetables need 8+ hours of sunlight per day. Some tolerate 4-6 hours but may not grow as well.
- **Water** – Water moves nutrients around inside the plant. Water deeply and focus on watering the roots of the plants. Plants need more water when it is hot outside.
- **Soil** – Soil is the source of most nutrients that the plant needs to grow. Soil texture (sandy or clay) will determine how well plants can get nutrients and how often they will need to be watered.
- **Compost** – Compost provides nutrients that may be missing from the soil and improves the soil structure, both of which makes it easier for plants to grow. Mix compost into new gardens when getting started and add a layer to the soil surface as a mulch.
- **Plants** – Choose vegetables that you like to eat or that are hard to find in your area.

PREPARING YOUR GARDEN

Find a Location

- Pick a place with lots of sun
- Keep it near a source of water
- Make sure you can access it easily

Choose a Garden Style

- In-Ground
- Raised Beds
- Containers

GARDEN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Start with smaller gardens and increase over time
- Align garden beds from east-to-west to get the most sun
- Limit garden depth to 3-4 feet to make it easy to weed and harvest
- Plan 2-foot wide paths between garden beds to make care easier

LEARN MORE WITH THESE RESOURCES

- ❖ **University of MN Extension Program** 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

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Where will I grow?

How much sun does my garden area get?

What style of garden will work for my location?

Which vegetables do I like to eat?