UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MINNESOTA! ENVIRONMENT • FOOD & AGRICULTURE • COMMUNITIES • FAMILIES • YOUTH

Introduction to Vegetable Gardening

Introduction to Vegetable Gardening is a 3-part series of classes to help beginning and intermediate vegetable gardeners expand their knowledge and improve their vegetable gardening skills. Whether you want to grow veggies in your yard, a raised bed, in containers or in a community garden plot, this workshop is filled with tips to help you reap the harvest and the satisfaction of 'homegrown."

Brought to you by the University of Minnesota Extension & Ramsey County Master Gardeners

1

PART 2 – ADDING PLANTS

- Choosing plants
- Adding plants to the garden

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION   4

4

Choosing Vegetables

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION   5

5

2/15/20

HOW TO DECIDE

- Garden Limitations
  - Amount of sunlight
  - Space
- Personal Preferences
  - Favorite flavors
  - Availability
  - Goals & intentions

6

6

GROWING IN MN

- Short growing season
  - Mid-May to early-Oct
  - 150 days
- MN vegetables
  - Cool-season Crops
  - Tender Crops
  - Warm-season Crops

7

7

COOL-SEASON CROPS

Vegetables that should be planted outside from seed **once the soil can be worked** *(April-May)*

See Complete Listing in Appendix

8

8

TENDER CROPS

Vegetables that should be planted outside from seed but the **soil must be warm** before planting *(May-June)*

See Complete Listing in Appendix

9

9

WARM SEASON CROPS

Vegetables that require more time to grow than a MN season allows

- Grow from seed indoors *(Feb-Mar)* **OR**
- Purchase transplants *(May-June)*

See Complete Listing in Appendix

10

10

EASY-TO-GROW

- Beets
- Cucumbers
- Green beans
- Kale
- Radish
- Tomatoes
- Zucchini

11

11

SEEDS VS TRANSPLANTS

- Considerations
  - Which vegetables?
  - How many plants do I need?
  - How much do I want to spend?
  - How much work do I want to do?

12

GROWING FROM SEEDS

- Benefits
  - Unlimited variety
  - Can be saved for multiple years

- Considerations
  - Choose reliable sources
  - Require extra planning
  - Store leftover seed

13

STARTING WITH TRANSPLANTS

- Benefits
  - Plants right away
  - Vegetables ripen sooner
  - May be required (ex. tomatoes)

- Considerations
  - Stout (not "leggy")
  - No flowers
  - Avoid "root-bound" plants

14

PLANT STOCK

- Hybrid (F1)
- Heirloom
- Organic
- GM/GE
- Open-pollinated

15

15

READING A PLANT DESCRIPTION

- Name
- Description
  - Taste
  - History
  - Disease Resistance
  - Growing details
- Harvest time
- Price

16

16

PLANT SOURCES

- Catalogs
- Garden stores
- Plants sales
- Seed library
- Seed swaps
- Retail stores

17

17

Planting Vegetables
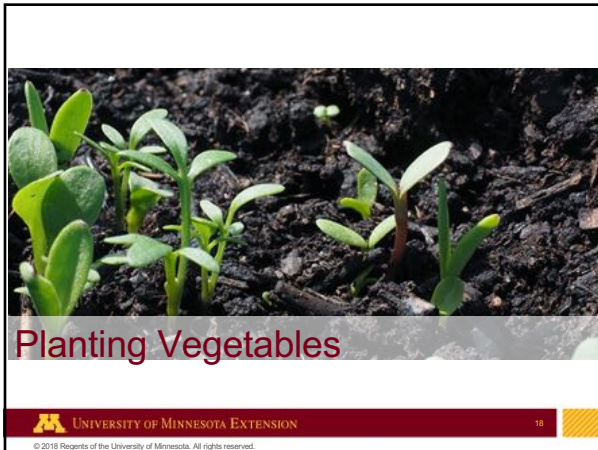
18

CROP ARRANGEMENT

- Group similar plants together
- Put taller crops on the north side
- Grow fast-ripening crops in easy reach
- Plant vining plants on the edges
- Move perennial crops to the sides

19

READING A SEED PACKET

- Name
- Vegetable details
- Growing instructions
- Harvest time

20

DIRECT SEEDING

Steps

1. Measure spacing & depth*
2. Loosen soil (trench or hole)
3. Plant seeds*
4. Cover with soil
5. Water gently

*Read the seed packet

21

21

GERMINATION

- Development Stages
  – Roots first
  – Seed leaves
  – True leaves
- Keep soil moist but not soaked
- May take 5-20 days

22

22

THINNING SEEDLINGS

- Remove extra sprouts
  – Helps plants grow
  – Improves air circulation
  – Discourages disease
- Use scissors or pruning shears; **never** pull from roots

23

23

HARDENING OFF

- Gradually introduce seedlings to the outdoors
  - Start 2 weeks before transplanting
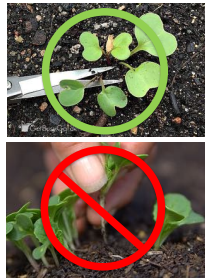 - Increase time outdoors & amount of direct sunlight each day
  - Bring plants inside at night

- Once hardened-off, seedlings can remain outside until transplanted

NOTE: Continue bringing Warm season and tender plants inside if there is threat of frost

24

24

TRANSPLANTING

Steps
1. Choose a cloudy day
2. Prepare garden location*
3. Remove the root-ball from the pot**
4. Place root-ball into hole
5. Fill with soil
6. Water gently

*Read the plant label
Grip the plant by a leaf if needed; **NEVER by the stem

25

25

PROPER SPACING

- Vegetables get BIG as they grow

- Leave room between transplants*

*Read the plant label

Early June   8 weeks later

26

26

PLANT LABELS

- Benefits
  - Easy to tell vegetables from weeds
  - Lots of design options

- Recommendations
  - Add after planting seeds or transplants
  - Use materials that are weather-resilient

27

27

SUPPORT STRUCTURES

- Benefits
  - Prevents wind damage
  - Improves air-flow
  - Discourages disease
  - Facilitates harvesting

- Recommendations
  - Add after planting seeds or transplants
  - Use fences, trellises, or stakes

28

28

VEGETABLE GARDEN MULCH

- Benefits
  - Holds moisture in soil
  - Slows weeds
  - Controls soil-borne bacteria/fungus

- Recommendations
  - Add after adding transplants & after seeds sprout
  - Use dried leaves, straw, newspaper, or compost
  - Avoid hard mulch like wood chips or stone

29

29

FLOWERS

- Benefits
  - Improves pollination of fruit
  - Attracts beneficial insects
  - Helps control insect pests

- Recommendations
  - Add annual flowers to garden or plant nearby
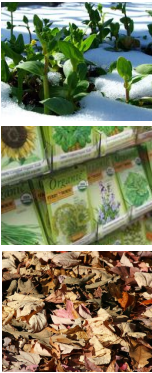 - Allow older vegetables to produce flowers ("bolt")

30

30

CLASS RECAP

- Pick vegetables that can grow in the amount of sun you have
- Grow from seeds or transplants
- Give your plants space, support & labels
- Mulch around plants

31

31

GARDEN RESOURCES

- U of MN Extension:
  - https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden
- Ramsey County Diagnostic Clinic:
  - http://www.ramseymastergardeners.org/index.php/events/diagnostic-clinic
- Ask An Expert Hotline:
  - http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/ask/
- Ramsey County Yard Waste Sites:
  - https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/recycling-waste/collection-sites/yard-waste
- U of MN Soil Test Services:
  - http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu/

35

35