

**L**ANDON'S  
**GREENHOUSE & NURSERY**  
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*Where Quality Counts*

## NOTES FROM VEGGIE GARDENING PRESENTATION

### FOLK WISDOM

You'll hear to plant potatoes on Good Friday or set tomatoes and peppers out on Memorial Day. Good Friday USUALLY (not this year) comes in mid-April, which is exactly the time you want to plant potatoes, and since May 25<sup>th</sup> is the historic last day of frost, planting the tender plants in your garden on Memorial Day usually – though not always – ensures that you miss the last frost.

Around here, the saying is don't plant your garden until the snow is off the face of the mountains. Our weather comes from the west, and if the snow hasn't melted, there's still cold air coming our way. Notice that it is usually off around Memorial Day.

### FERTILIZING

Fertilizers can be very confusing, but we want you to FERTILIZE! There are veggies that are heavy feeders, some moderate and some light. Heavy Feeders are: Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Pumpkins, Squash, Tomatoes. Beans and peas will rebuild the nitrogen in the soil after these crops. Heavy feeders will need regular, supplemental fertilizer, according to directions on package, and may benefit from continuous feeding. (Generally, dilute the recommended periodic concentration to ¼.)

Moderate feeders are kale, broccoli, lettuce, chard and cabbage. These would need ¼ the amount of fertilizer recommended, or perhaps once per month with a light dilution.

Light feeders are Beets, garlic, carrots, leeks, spinach, onions and potatoes. They may not need any supplemental feeding, unless growing in a container.

Top-dressing, or mulching with compost, serves a dual purpose of mulch and fertilizer. Mulching can save 50% on the water.

## PEST CONTROL

If you don't want to use pesticides, the single best pest control is . . . prevention. It works just like it does for us: keep your plants (and your garden) healthy and they will be able to resist disease and pests. We've already talked about some of these steps: watering deeply, fertilizing appropriately, amending the soil and mulching. In the last class we touched on Companion Planting, which is a technique to grow plants together that assist each other, either by repelling bad bugs, attracting good ones or just simply enhancing flavor. Companion Planting also involves proper crop rotation. There are extensive hand-outs for this on our website: Companion Plants, Companion Planting: Quick Rules, Companion Planting: Pest Control with Herbs and Flowers and Companion Planting: Cool and Warm Season Vegetables.

Other steps you can take towards Organic Pest Control:

### Encourage Bug Predators:

- \*Birds eat bugs! Netting will protect crops they might eat.
- \*Let Spiders live!
- \*Ponds bring in dragonflies, frogs and toads
- \*Pile of logs to encourage beetles, etc.

### Physical Controls:

- \*Vigilance – catch em before they get going – for example, tomato horn worm
- \*Handpicking (use em for compost!)
- \*Barriers & Traps – Fence, netting, diatomaceous earth, fabric covers, yellow sticky cards, beer traps for slugs sunk in to ground level, cardboard tube for earwigs to crawl in to even in daytime then dispose of it,

### Botanical Pest Control:

Just because it's organic does not mean it's safe. Read the label, use sparingly and with caution. Unlike inorganic pesticides, will break down in garden rather than linger in environment. Some of these will kill beneficial insects as well.

- \*Pyrethrum (from chrysanthemums) – aphids, fleabeetles, caterpillars
- \*Rotenone (because of effects on mammals, not readily available anymore)
- \*Hort Oil – mineral oils that suffocate
- \*Soap & Water, Insecticidal Soap – soft bodied insects like aphids, leafhoppers, mites and mealybug

### Biologicals:

- \*Ladybugs
- \*Bacillus thuringiensis for butterfly and moth caterpillars, nematodes for soil
- \*NoloBait
- \*Praying Mantis
- \*Beneficial wasps

Here are some of the common pests you might find in your garden:

Slugs – watch for slimey trail, treat with diatomaceous earth, pan of beer

Aphids – ladybugs, hort oil

White fly – hort oil, neem

Spider Mites – hose off in a.m., hort oil

Flea beetles – scatter when you walk through garden; lots when there's lots of grasshoppers because they eat the eggs, rotenone or neem oil

Cut worms – chew off at stem; organic control is a barrier of foil or tin.

Tomato Horn Worms – remove

Grasshoppers – companion plantings of cilantro and /or Datura, Semaspore Bait

Whatever you treat with, make sure you can eat it – read label!

#### VEGGIE RUNDOWN A-Z:

Artichoke – Can be grown here. Very long crop; get started early by using wall of water. Also could keep warm and extend season by planting close to house. Get very large; look good in gardens with flowers. Once you harvest the first one, will branch out and grow more. Delicious!

Asparagus – Roots vs. plants (show), male and female. Plant where you want it; lasts forever and can't be moved. Worth the extra time. Handout available.

Easier method in Lasagna Gardening.

Beans – Bush don't need support; divide seeds in to thirds, plant every 2 weeks for 6 weeks for continuous harvest. These could grow in a container. Dry Beans like chickpeas need extra time; start in peat indoors early. Pole beans need support, yield more than bush, some say they taste better. Plant seeds after danger of frost is past. Place supports first. Direct bean beetles away from beans by planting a grapevine nearby; they'll go there.

Beets – Fast growing, easy, fun to pull makes them a plus for kids. Sprinkle bonemeal at planting. Plant every 2 weeks to extend harvest. Thin when have 2 true leaves to 4 inches apart. Big container would work.

Broccoli – Harden off (explain) transplants. Can take cold. Heavy feeders; mulch with compost. Cut the main head when small to get side yield. Lg. Container would work.

Brussels Sprouts – Cabbage family; tiny "cabbages" in the axils of the leaves. Can take it cold. Pick the lowest sprouts each time you harvest, and break off leaves left below that. Don't remove top leaves.

Cabbage – Can take temps down to 10-15 degrees! Decide time you want to harvest and select type accordingly. Pick timely, when its reached right size, or will split. We have Red, Late, Stonehead, and the typical big gray-green. Pretty plant.

Carrots – Need loose soil – lasagna gardening might be the thing, or heavily amend. Pick when small for best taste. Lasagna Gardening Book has words on all different types.

Cauliflower – Also cool weather tolerant. When the head begins to form, “blanche” the buds by pulling outer leaves over the head, gathering them together and tying them loosely with string or rubber band to keep from turning green. (Self-blanching does this on it’s own.) New variety cheddar is yellow; has 25 times more beta carotene than others (source of Vit A). Purple cauliflower stays that color even when cooked.

Celery – Bog plant. If you have a wet area, plant this!

Chives – Mine in perennial garden; beautiful flower. Can divide after several years. Can be containerized, but won’t survive winter.

Corn – Soil should be 60 degrees before planting. Plant in 3 rows, never just 1. See Lasagna Gardening book, pg. 208 for something on types of corn. Harvest: use thumbnail to squeeze a kernel; when it squirts milky juice is ready.

Cucumbers – Two types, slicers and picklers. Slicers usually good eating; picklers stay small for canning – this is relative! Bush type can be in container, even HB. Most vine up to 6 feet. Plant in hills under corn, or grow up a trellis for space savings. Rotate to new space every year, only returning after 3 years. Plant new crops every 2 weeks or so, can plant up to 4<sup>th</sup> of July and still get harvest. White leaves result from cold temps. A good “rotation” is peas, then cucs.

Eggplant – tomato and potato relative. Each plant produces about 12 fruits. Can grow in containers. Harvest before loses gloss. Our Dusky is virus resistant; Ichaban is more prolific than other varieties.

Garlic – Plant hard-neck in fall for early spring harvest, or soft-neck now for summer harvest. Elephant garlic is soft-neck. Separate cloves. Push cloves 2 inches in to soil. Clip the bud before it goes to seed. Harvest when stems turn brown, loosening soil so as not to break the stems. Bind stems of several plants with rubber band and hang to dry. Also rotate your garlic bed. From supermarket, garlic has been treated and won’t grow as well.

Horseradish – Easy, invasive, put it where you want it. Enhances potatoes; plant in end of rows or corners of beds and then make sure you get it all out in fall! Harvest in fall. Plant 2 inches below surface; there is no “up”!

Kohlrabi – Often called turnip cabbage, produces a turnip-like protrusion in the midst of cabbage-like leaves. Eat the swollen stem young, about 2-2 1/2 inches across; cook like a turnip. Cool weather crop. Container.

Leeks – Like onions but without the bulbs. Stems are wonderful eating.

Lettuce – Likes it cool, with afternoon shade. Or shade with taller crops. For best flavor, pick in morning or late in day. Will bolt (go to seed and get bitter) when it gets hot. Good in Containers. There are many types: head – which produces loose heads; leaf, harvest leaves and it keeps growing back; romaine; mesclun, which is a mix of greens harvested altogether.

Melons – We can grow watermelon, muskmelon and cantelopes. Get the starts. Don't put out until soil and air is warm. Cantelopes ripe when stems pull off easily (slipping). Skin looks like a cork net and stem cracks a little way around. Honeydews ripe when rinds turn completely yellow. Hard to get a harvest due to frost, but worth the taste!

Onion – sets (bulbs) easiest for beginners. Thin either to 4 inches apart, eating the thinnings. When stems brown, bend over horizontal to ground. When all completely dead, harvest and let onions dry on top of ground for a few days. Keep flower stems trimmed to force energy to bulb.

Peas – Edible pods save snapping time! Add bone meal and/or wood ash for phosphate. Plant before last frost – now, in fact. Stagger planting for continuous harvest. Support the vines. Like it cool, some shade. Low water requirements. Pick every day or two to keep them producing. Morning harvested tastes best.

Peppers – Hotness concentrated in veins near the seeds. Yellow or orange veins indicate, usually, hotter pepperness. Experiment on jalapenos that I heard about: less water meant less hot – counter-intuitive. Plant when nights above 50's or use wall o water. Lanza has interesting growing techniques. Red peppers go through a green stage first. Related to tomato and eggplant.

Potatoes – Use old furrow method, where you plant the cut down, cover with dirt, more dirt when plants poke through. Lasagna place seed potatoes right on the newspaper, cover w/ 10 inches of hay (this is too much; eyes must be able to sense the light, so about 2-4 inches), add more as vines grow. Lift the hay for harvest! Cut so each piece has 2-3 eyes. Potatoes can break up the soil; one thing to do for a garden is grow them first. Can grow in garbage cans, etc.

Pumpkins – Vines grow 20-25 feet! Underplant with corn. Remove all but strongest plant from hill. Need lots of water. Plant with lots of compost.

Rhubarb – Plant shallow, water once and leave it. Light harvest first year. Don't cut stalks, break off. Never take more than 1/3 of stems at a time. Divide every 3-5 years. Cut back flower/seed heads to encourage stalk development.

Spinach – Sow very early. Likes it cool. Can grow in container. Stagger plantings for longer harvest. Since it grows so fast, you can also plant in late summer for a second harvest.

Squash – Prolific! Remove weaker seedlings. Hills. Summer squash is fast-growing and produces thin-skinned fruits in abundance. Takes up less space than winter squash. Ready to harvest when thumbnail pierces the skin; doesn't and it's too late. Winter squash should mature until skin is very hard. Zucchini is summer squash. Winter squash has tough hide and interesting shapes, like acorn. Usually sweeter than summer squash and can be stored. Takes up more space and should be left on vine until fully ripened.

Strawberries – June bearing, one harvest, usually sends out runners.

Everbearing, usually fewer runners, late summer to fall continuous harvest.

Tricks for runners: plant 4 inches apart so runners can fill in; in larger bed, put runners in to next row. Will get harvest first year from roots or plants of June

bearing (ours); small harvest first year with everbearer. Will need to replace about every 3 years.

Tomatoes – Red mulch has a wavelength that results in higher yields and bigger fruit. Determinate vs. Indeterminate. VFN is a virus resistant statement. How to trim. Plant deep, so half to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of stem is below soil level. Putting on cages. Wall-o-Water. Hardening off. Determinate good for container, but Sweet 100 will work, too. Blossom end rot. Overwatering and leaf roll. Pink milder in taste. Color has little to do with acidity. Since tomatoes are no longer necessarily high in acid, for safety, must be canned according to Extension Service specs, using vinegar and a long water-bath time.