

# VICTORY GARDEN 2.0

## Best Practices for a Successful Vegetable Garden



Growing ones own food has become more popular over the past few years. At Eckert's Greenhouse, we want you to succeed. Here you will find the importance of growing conditions, watering, inviting pollinators and companion planting.

### Growing Conditions

There are many important parts to planning and getting your vegetable garden to succeed. Some of the most important elements in growing conditions for your garden is sunlight, soil, plant types, and maintenance.

**Sunlight** - Most crops depend on at least 6-8 hours of full sun in order to grow properly and maintain overall health. Leafy vegetables like greens are the most shade tolerant.

**Soil** - Good soil is key to healthy plants and a successful garden. Testing your soil is a great way to get an idea on what nutrients your soil needs.

Depending on what your soil type is and the test results you may need to add the following to your garden:

- Manure
- Peat Moss
- Compost
- Garden Soil

**Plant Types** - Types of plants must suit the climate requirements.

Vegetables fall within one of four types:

**Hardy** - Can normally tolerate temps below freezing and tend to be planted first in the garden:

*Onions, radishes, broccoli, cabbage, and asparagus*

**Half-hardy** - Can tolerate light frosts and can be planted slightly before the last frost:

*Beets, carrots, cauliflower, lettuce, and potatoes*

**Tender** - Cannot tolerate cooler temps, so should be placed well after the last frost:

*Corn, beans, and tomatoes*

**Extremely tender** - 3 to 4 week period after frost is needed before planting:

*Cucumbers, melons, squash, and pumpkins*

**Maintenance** - Maintaining a garden can be work but the reward is well worth it. Here are the most common maintenance needed:

*Weeding, watering, fertilizing, mulching, pruning or staking, protecting from wildlife, resolving disease and insect problems.*

## Watering and Fertilizing

As stated in our *'Guide to Successful Watering'* handout, the key elements are when should you water, how much, and what kind of fertilizer.

- You want to water in the morning or mid-day so the plants have time to absorb the moisture before the cooler evening temps hit. Avoid watering any foliage cause that can lead to a variety of diseases.
- Recent transplants need frequent, light watering to accommodate their shallow roots. Once plants are established, keep soil moist to a depth of 6-8 inches. Best practice is to use soaker hoses.
- Use either a dry organic fertilizer like the Espoma brand we carry or use a chemical fertilizer like Jack's All Purpose where you mix it into water.

### Mixing in Flowers

Interspersing flowering herbs, annual flowers and native perennials among the vegetable garden can lead to great benefits:

- By providing valuable food and shelter for native pollinators your garden can produce more fruit
- Attract beneficial insects can provide natural pest protections
- Add diversity to attract the eye

### Companion Planting

What many gardeners overlook are the benefits of companion planting.

Example, one plant may deter garden pests that harm another species, while in return, that other species might enhance soil nutrients.

Most common 'best friend combo' is tomatoes and marigolds.

Learn more by visiting our website.

## Cold Weather Precautions

When weather forecast shows 40° and under in early spring, its best to practice precaution by covering all vegetables with either a bed sheet or newspaper. Not plastic- it will freeze then since it can hold moisture against the plant.



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