

Vegetable Gardening

Gray Barn Green Thumb Guide



Growing your own vegetables is perhaps the most rewarding type of gardening. Not only do you get to harvest what you've grown, you get to eat it too! In addition to being rewarding, growing and eating your own veggies is safer than store bought produce, convenient, money saving and healthy!

Site Selection- In order to have a productive veggie garden, site selection is the first decision to make. The three most important factors are:

1. **Sun-** vegetables need six to eight hours of direct sun a day. Less than this will produce small, stunted or no fruit.
2. **Proximity to your house-** Choose a spot that is close to your house for quick, easy harvesting and near a hose spicket.
3. **Well draining soil-** Make sure the area you choose to grow your vegetables in has well draining soil. An area that is slow draining or pools water can potentially rot your vegetable plants.

Soil- Loose, rich soil is the key to happy plants, including vegetables. If you already have a vegetable bed dug, add three to four inches of compost to the top of it each spring. Doing so will add nutrients to the bed and replenish what might of washed away with the winter rains. If you are starting a veggie bed from scratch, you've got a bit more work to do! If your new vegetable bed is going in an area that is currently grass, you'll need to dig out the grass. Do so in chunks or strips or use a pick axe to tear it out. Once you have your space defined, dig into and loosen the soil beneath. Now add your three to four inches of compost. If you wish to do a soil test to determine the ph, do so at this point. Otherwise, broadcast a tomato/vegetable fertilizer over the bed, 10 pounds per 100 sq ft. You'll also place a bit of this same fertilizer in the hole before you put your plants in the ground.

Seeds or Starts-

Some vegetables can be grown easily in the ground from seed, while others perform best from a transplant or start. Lettuce, peas, carrots and radishes are easily started from planting the seeds directly into the ground. When you are just beginning a vegetable garden, stick with vegetable starts. These are vegetable plants that are already started and growing. Transplant these into your beds or pots at home and you save yourself starting plants from seed. As you become more comfortable with vegetables, you'll want to experiment more with seed starting and growing your own from the beginning of the plants life cycle.

Choosing the Right Variety- There are a couple important things to remember when choosing your seeds or starts. Read the back of the seed packet or plant stake to find out the ultimate plant height and size so you can place it in the right spot.

