Fond du Lac County

Community Garden News

Fond du Lac County UW-Extension

Patty's garden notes….

Summer 2013

I started putting together the spring newsletter in early June – some of the info will pertain to early summer…

I have had a few complaints about putting up the chains on the roads this year – This is to prevent people from driving on the roads following heavy rains. As per our 'Garden Rules,' **this is not acceptable**, and it is a total lack of common sense!

The first time one of the roads dried enough to remove the chain, someone drove all the way around the east side of the garden and got stuck in the wettest area on that side of the gardens! I had just received a complaint about the chains still being up the same day, and my response was- I can't take them down until the whole garden is dry enough to drive through. With a recent rain, some of the roads that remain wet will not be able to be driven on.

There will be NO DRIVING in the gardens after heavy rains!!!!!!!

One of the issues I see every year is planting beyond the garden plot areas. This is a bad practice…it makes for difficult grass mowing and you will probably get the plantings driven over or mowed off.

Please place any rocks you find in your gardens in the deeper rut areas or over at the south edge of the gardens near the trees. If the mower hits them, it can cause damage and repairs are costly.

Just this week I received a call from an officer who was called to the garden. The person calling him did the right thing in this situation… The man was issued a citation for disorderly conduct, and the incident was resolved. I am not in the office enough to be available to help quickly if you have a serious issue, so calling 911 is the correct response.

Best Broccoli Salad

1 large head fresh broccoli
1 large head cauliflower
2 apples, peeled, cored, and chopped
1 (11 ounce) can mandarin oranges, drained
⅓ cup sunflower seeds
1 (16 ounce) bottle Catalina salad dressing

1. Cut broccoli and cauliflower into small to medium florets. Mix with apples and oranges.
2. Pour enough dressing over ingredients to coat. Toss and sprinkle with sunflower seeds.
3. Serve immediately or allow to chill and flavors to blend.

Swiss Chard Quiche

1 teaspoon olive oil
1 small red onion
6-8 stems of Swiss chard
½ cup shredded cheese (Swiss, cheddar, parmesan)
4 eggs
1 cup skim milk
Salt
Pepper

1. Wash and dry Swiss chard.
2. Cut off the very ends of the stem and roughly chop.
3. Add onion and chard to oil and sauté until stems are tender.
4. Wisk eggs. Add shredded cheese and milk.
5. Fold in the onion/chard mixture.
6. Pour into a sprayed pie dish.
7. Bake at 375 for 35 to 45 minutes until golden brown.
8. Test by sticking a knife into center. There should be no liquids coming out.

GARDENING

Gardening Pointers

- Select healthy seeds and seedlings that are known to resist diseases and are suited to the climate where you live. Strong seeds are likely to produce mature plants with little need for pesticides.

- If your garden is large, alternate rows of different kinds of plants. Pests that prefer one type of vegetable (carrots, for example) may not spread to every one of your carrot plants if other vegetables (not on the pests' diet) are planted in the neighboring rows.

- Don't plant the same crop in the same spot year after year. That way your plants are not as vulnerable to pests that survive the winter.

- Make sure your garden plot has good drainage. Raised beds will improve drainage, especially of clay soils. If a heavy clay soil becomes compacted, it does not allow air and water to get to the roots easily, and plants struggle to grow. To loosen compacted soil and create air spaces so that water and nutrients can reach the roots, buy or rent a tiller that breaks up the dirt and turns it over. Before planting, add sand and organic matter to enrich the soil mixture in your garden plot. Also, have the soil tested periodically to see whether you need to add more organic matter or adjust the pH (acidity/ alkalinity) balance by adding lime or sulfur. Your County Cooperative Extension Service, listed in the telephone book, or local nursery should be able to tell you how to do this.

- Mulch your garden with leaves (chopped), hay, grass clippings, shredded/chipped bark, or seaweed. Mulching is beneficial in a wet or dry season…it can help keep the soil moist during dry periods, or soak up excess moisture around the plants in a rainy season.

- When planting in wet soil areas, try to improve the site's drainage. Addition of loose organic material, such as composted leaves, pine bark, and peat moss can improve porosity in the soil. Plant on raised beds or berms, install swales, waterways, and drain tiles to divert excess water away from trees and shrubs. Finally, plant health care is an important step to reduce further plant decline. Remove dead or diseased plants and water plants during extended droughts. Aerate the soil around the roots

- If your soil is subject to standing water after a heavy rainfall, it is best to plant species that are tolerant to wet soils. Also, different plants tolerate different degrees of wetness. Is your area permanently wet, somewhat wet, or wet for only a few days at a time? Roots need oxygen for growth and respiration and the longer the roots stay submerged, the more difficult it is for the plant to survive.

VEGETABLES THAT THRIVE IN WET SOIL

Spinach

Spinach grows best in moist, fertile, well-drained soil. A few varieties of spinach include plain-leaf, plain-leaf hybrid, crinkled leaf and hybrid savoy. Spinach is an excellent source of vitamins A, C, E and K. You can prepare spinach steamed, fresh or quickly boiled to benefit from this highly nutritional plant. As the world's second largest producer of spinach, the United States accounts for 3% of the world's output. Opt for spinach the next time you are looking for healthy eating choices; spinach provides potassium, folic acid, calcium, protein, zinc and omega-3 fatty acids. Considered to be a rich source of iron, spinach also contains iron absorption-inhibiting substances such as oxalic acid. Be advised that highly oxalic acidic foods like spinach can increase the risk of kidney stones in some people. Popular spinach dishes include stews, casseroles and dressings.

Cilantro

A commonly used ingredient in cuisines around the world, cilantro derives from the Coriandrum sativum plant. Cilantro, the leaves of Coriandrum sativum, is always used fresh in Spanish, Middle Eastern, Indian, Asian and South American dishes. Cilantro is often used in Mexican and Southwestern U.S. meals when sprinkled on cooked dishes, or minced or puréed in sauces, soups and curries. The entire Coriandrum sativum plant is edible and thrives in sunlight and moist soil when cultivated.

Kale

No longer seen as just a garnish on plates, kale is great for soups and salads and is rich in vitamins A and C, high in potassium, calcium and iron, and a good source of fiber. Kale is rich in beta carotene, vitamin K, and is green or purple in color. Considered a superfood, Kale is a form of cabbage containing powerful antioxidant properties. You can add kale to your diet through a variety of dishes including soups, salads, and it can even be enjoyed as a juice. Kale can be made into a healthy snack called Baked Kale Chips, which includes drizzling kale with olive oil, sprinkling it with seasoning salt and baking it for 15 minutes. Kale is a cool season vegetable that prefers sunlight, fertile and moist soil and is very tolerant of frost.

Cabbage

This annual-season crop, the fourth-most produced vegetable in the United States, comes in white, green and purple varieties. Cabbage, classified as a “heavy feeder,” needs plenty of moisture to develop properly.

Broccoli and Cauliflower

Part of the brassica family (along with cabbage), each plant produces several florets that become quite large when ripe. Broccoli and cauliflower roots thrive in soil without prolonged dry spells, so moist soil is a must.

Peas

This cool-weather vegetable, which takes about two months to grow, comes in a wide variety, ranging from green to English to dwarf. Peas can be planted in anything from a light, sandy composite soil to heavy clay soil, but they need plenty of moisture to grow.

SUCCESSION PLANTING

The following is a great article from 'Organic Gardening';

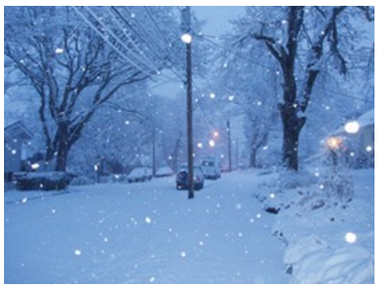
A Smart Succession Plan Means Fresh Food From Spring Until Snowfall

By Barbara Damrosch

Succession planting—following one crop with another—is the most important tool for maximizing a garden's yield. Creating a detailed succession plan now eliminates the guesswork of what and when to plant later on in the season. Get started by making a list of all the vegetables you want to grow and developing an understanding of their individual growth habits and preferences.

Catalog descriptions and seed packet instructions offer each vegetable's vital statistics, including when to first plant in spring, how many days the variety takes to reach maturity, how much space it requires, and if it is frost-tolerant.

Consider, too, how long each vegetable produces. Some crops, such as radishes and cress, have a harvest period of just a few weeks. Carrots, beets, and other vegetables with an intermediate maturation time may be sown in spring and again in late summer for fall and winter harvests. Others, including tomatoes and peppers, are long-season crops that bear continuously, while Brussels sprouts, corn, and winter squash remain in the ground for several months but only bear at the end of their season.



Create a Planting Schedule

Assembling all of this crop information into a planting plan is a bit like putting together a giant jigsaw puzzle of the garden. Simplify things by drawing a spring, summer, and fall diagram of each bed. Begin plugging vegetables into the diagram, with early, quick crops followed by long -season ones. Be sure to note the approximate date each crop needs to be sown or transplanted and when the expected harvest date is.

Vegetables that belong to the same plant family (such as cabbage, mustard, and kale) share pests and diseases. It's wise to keep in mind what family a vegetable belongs to and avoid planting one member, say tomatoes, in the same spot where a cousin—peppers, eggplants, potatoes, or tomatillos—grew in the previous 3 years.

Manage same-crop successions by sowing small amounts of seed or transplanting a few seedlings at regular intervals, either in the same bed or at different times in various parts of the garden. Sowing small rows of leafy greens weekly, for instance, ensures a consistent supply for salads rather than a big surplus all at once. Simultaneously planting varieties that mature at different times, such as early, middle, and late-ripening corn, is another way to extend the harvest time of a single crop.

PLANTING

Choose the Right Varieties

Variety selections are also important when planning how to use the harvest in the kitchen. For canning and freezing, grow varieties that produce a concentrated harvest—such as determinate tomatoes, bush beans, pickling cucumbers, and broccoli varieties that form one large head per plant—and can then be pulled to make room for a new crop. For continuous harvests, choose varieties that yield consistently over a longer period, including pole beans, indeterminate tomatoes, and broccoli that produces side shoots for weeks after the main head is harvested.

Climate, weather, and growing conditions affect variety choice and succession timing, too. Take bok choy and spinach. In spring, lengthening days and warming temperatures encourage these vegetables to bolt quickly. Sowing heat-tolerant varieties helps extend their harvest early in the year, but it is less important in fall, because the vegetables last longer in cooler weather. When buying seed or transplants, think about the potential challenges crops will face-high summer heat, humidity, cold springs, heavy soil, early fall frosts-and choose varieties that will perform best in your climate and the season you want to grow them in.

Doubling Up

When planning successions and selecting vegetable varieties, consider how two or more crops might share the same space, a practice known as interplanting. Pairing plants with different maturity rates, like slow-growing Tuscan kale and lettuce, works particularly well because the lettuce heads mature before the kale grows big enough to shade or crowd them out.

Mixing plants with complimentary growth habits, such as lettuce, which has a deep taproot, and shallow-rooted scallions also makes efficient use of space and increases yields. So does planting short crops, such as beets and radishes, along the bottom of a trellis planted with peas, beans, or cucumbers.

Planting Tricks

Plant spacing also influences yield, and many crops can be planted closer together than most sources recommend. Tuscan kale seedlings are typically planted a foot apart, but spacing them at 10 inches encourages the development of small, long-bearing, tender-leaved plants. In good soil, a carrot needs only 4 square inches of space to grow in—so try sowing them 2 inches apart in a row, with 12 rows to a 30-inch-wide bed.

Some crops, including spinach and carrots, must always be seeded directly into the garden. Others, such as tomatoes and peppers, grow best when planted as seedlings. But many vegetables—including all greens, summer and winter squash, lettuces, and herbs like parsley and basil—grow well from seedlings or by seed. A simple way to get a staggered harvest of these crops is to sow seed and transplant seedlings into the garden at the same time. To keep each garden bed full and producing, try to have seedlings on hand and ready to go in whenever a space comes available.

Climate Considerations

Understanding how crops grow, learning to interplant and plan successions, and choosing varieties that thrive in specific conditions is the best way to overcome climate challenges. Gardeners in warm regions must take advantage of their tame winters by growing cabbages, greens, and peas, and appreciate their summers-and the melons, peppers, and eggplants that thrive in hot weather.

Mild summers give gardeners in cool climates the opportunity to grow a wider range of vegetables, including heat-tolerant varieties of cool-season crops and short-season varieties of heat-loving ones; and with the help of season-extension tools, they can grow greens and root crops into the winter, as well. Really, planning carefully and using a garden's space wisely makes it possible to grow more vegetables almost anywhere. It is, after all, a generous earth.

Growing Vegetables by Succession Planting and Square-Foot Gardening

*By **Charlie Nardozzi** from **Vegetable Gardening For Dummies, 2nd Edition***

Succession planting and square-foot gardening are two gardening methods that help you produce more vegetables no matter how long your growing season is. *Succession planting* extends the harvest season because you either stagger planting times for a single crop or plant a different crop after one is harvested. *Square-foot gardening* is an intensive gardening technique that makes efficient use of small garden spaces.

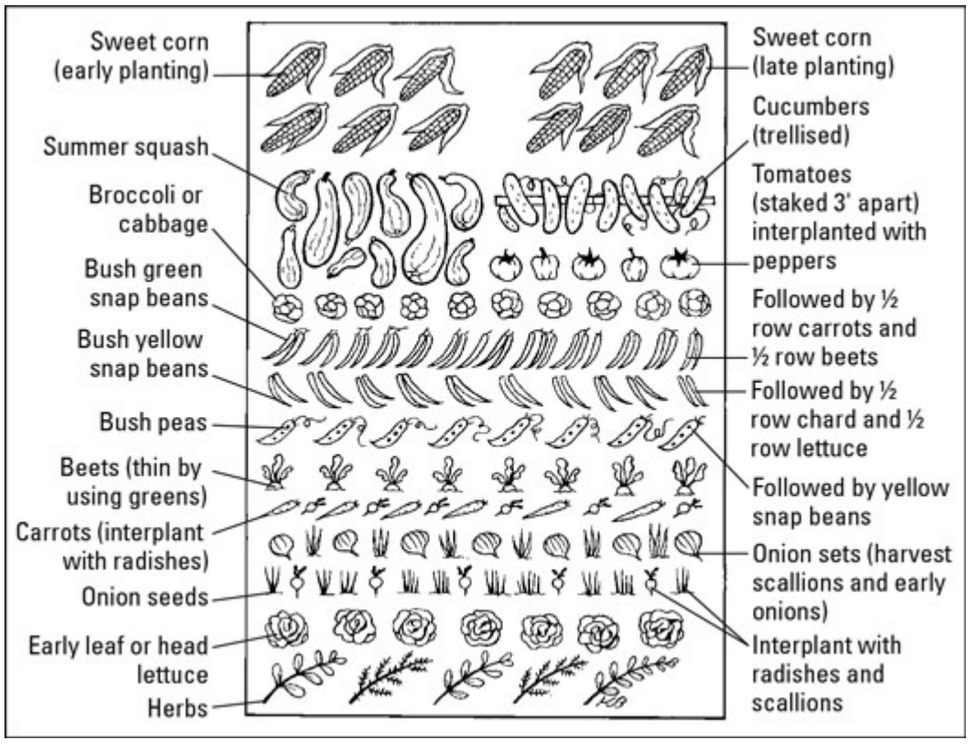
Succession Planting

Farmers use succession planting to ensure a constant supply of vegetables to take to market; you can use it to produce a consistent supply of vegetables to take to your table.

Stagger Planting Times

Staggering planting times is a great way to spread out harvest time. For example, instead of gathering all of your corn at once, you can harvest it over a period of several weeks. To plant in succession, you simply make smaller plantings separated by 2 to 3 weeks instead of planting everything at one time. If you want to experiment with succession planting, use these steps:

1. **Figure out how much of a certain vegetable your family needs for a 2- to 3-week period and how much room it will take to grow it.**



A sample plan of succession plantings

2. **Break your planting beds into three or four sections to grow your 2- to 3-week supply of the vegetable.**

3. **At the start of the planting season, plant the first bed; wait about 2 weeks and plant the second bed, and then plant the third bed about 2 weeks later.**

When you finish harvesting the first bed, the second bed will be ready to harvest. The length of your planting season determines how many successive plantings you can make. Depending on the weather, some of your later plantings may not yield well.

Share the Space

Another way to use succession planting is to replace a crop that's finished producing with a new one in the same place. For example, after your harvest spinach in the spring, plant cucumbers for the summer. After the cukes are harvested, plant kale for the fall. With this method, you can grow a wider variety of vegetables in a small space. Just make sure you're planting a cool-season veggie for spring or fall and a warm-season veggie for summer.

The following table lists some good succession planting combinations to try. You can choose one veggie from each column to plant in succession.

Succession Planting for Different Seasons

Spring	Summer	Fall
Spinach	Bush Beans	Kale
Mesclun greens	Cucumbers	Lettuce
Peas	Sweet corn	Collards
Radishes	Eggplant	Chinese cabbage

Square-foot gardening

Yet another way to ensure a constant harvest of vegetables is to plant using the square foot method. Select a 4-foot-by-4-foot section of your garden and divide it into 16 squares (each section is 1 square foot). Each square will have a different number of plants, depending on what you're growing:

- **1 plant per square:** tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, eggplant, corn, melon, squash
- **4 plants per square:** lettuce, garlic, Swiss chard
- **8 plants per square:** pole beans, peas, spinach
- **16 plants per square:** beets, carrots, radishes, onions

By planting so few plants, you'll have many small harvests, and you can easily make more succession plantings and rotate plantings each year.