

GETTING STARTED WITH VEGETABLE GARDENS



**SUCCESS WILL DEPEND ON LOCATION AND MICROCLIMATE,
CONDITIONS OF THE SOIL, AND AVAILABLE GROWING SPACE**

A Few Key Questions

- What food do my family and I love to cook with and eat?
- What produce is expensive to buy at the store?
- What is easy to grow for a beginner?
- How much sunlight do I have?
- Do I want to use containers, mounded beds, or wooden raised beds?
- What is the quality and composition of my soil? Should I buy soil?
- What are the first and last frost dates in my area?
- When do I plant each type of crop? (Refer to a planting chart)

Some Basics

- Radishes, tomatoes, peppers, carrots, and chard are easy to grow for a beginner
- Beet greens, broccoli, carrots, chard, kale, mustard greens, peppers, spinach, winter squash, tomatoes, and turnip greens are the most nutrient dense
- Carrots, parsnips, winter squash, dry beans, onions, herbs (dried) and potatoes store well
- Most vegetable garden beds are 3-4 ft wide by 5-10 ft long
- Vegetables need 6-8 hours of direct sunlight
- A soil/compost mix that has good nutrient and water holding capacity is ideal for growing vegetables (10-20% compost)
- Take advantage of microclimates and/or create them with barriers, raised beds, mulch, or radiant heat sources (rocks, structures, etc.)

Time Planting

A soil thermometer is a really helpful tool especially in the spring as it can help you determine which crops to plant depending on the soil temperature. Refer to a soil chart for optimum temperature ranges (<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/techniques/soil-temperature-conditions-vegetable-seed-germination>).

Here are a few tips for timing your planting based on when the soil reaches at least these minimum temperatures.

40-50°F

- peas, radish, carrots, beets, swiss chard, potatoes, onions, kale, lettuce, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower

50-60°F

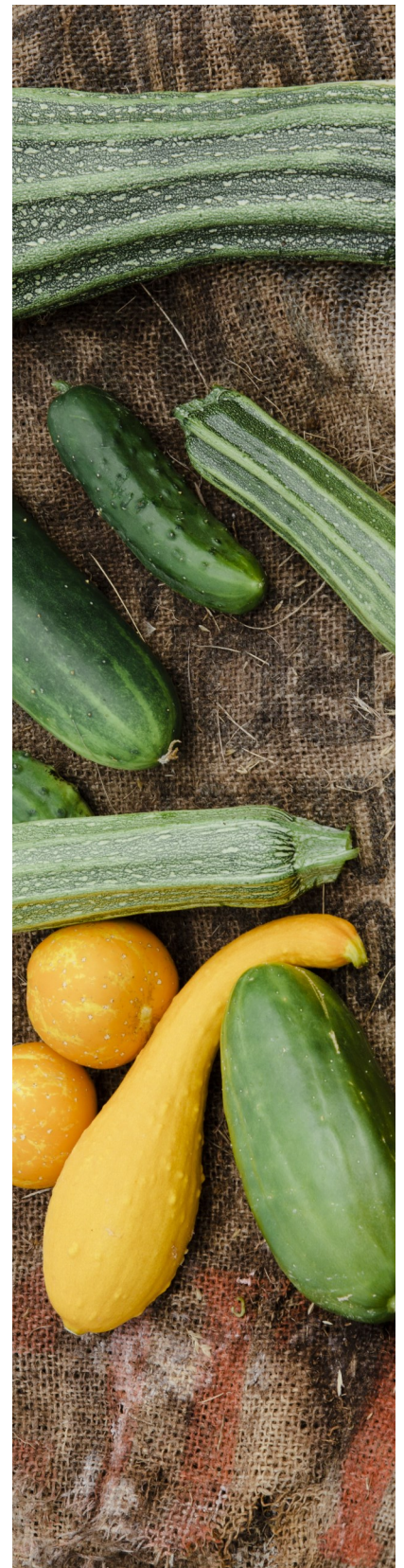
- cilantro, corn, tomatoes, cucumber

60-70°F

- snap beans, eggplants, peppers, musk melons, pumpkins, squash, zucchini, okra
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Visit uvm.edu/extension/mastergardener

for more information.



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