



Hints & Tips for a Successful Vegetable Plot

1. **Why** – own vegetables taste better, you know where they come from, it avoids chemicals, you can get the veg you love when you want it, cheaper, more fun, better for you.
2. If starting from scratch don't go too large to begin with.
3. You can start with a box on a table or a large container (flowerpot)
4. Can grow vegetable in amongst the flowers – no new beds required.
5. If you already have a veg patch, then review – does it work for you?
6. Check to location – where is the water supply, how much sun does it get?
7. Think about saving your water for irrigation.
8. Do you need Shelter – poly tunnel, greenhouse, cloches, fleece.
9. If possible, go for raised beds in the long run they are better for the plants and easier on your back and knees. Easier to weed and water and harvest.
10. Use fresh seed each year – although old seed will often germinate the yields are lower. Some in particular - parsnips, lettuce, broccoli, carrots and onions, only do well with fresh seeds
11. Plug plants are great for a quick start – can be found in the market or the garden centres.
12. Support – use fences, trellis, pergolas, sticks – anything which will enable you to grow upwards (takes less space)
13. Protection – deer, rabbits, mice, pigeons – all will try and eat the new veg.
14. Prepare the soil and feed it.
 - a. Ideally in autumn ready for spring
 - b. Cover with cardboard, black plastic to smother weeds.
 - c. Dig or no dig – your choice however, digging deeply disturbs the good microbes in the soil.
 - d. Mulch, mulch, mulch – not only to suppress weeds but also to feed the soil.
 - e. Use old compost, your own new compost, cardboard (breaks down over winter) grass cuttings, STRAW, your own wood chips (well-rotted)
15. Collect your own seeds if appropriate but not F1 Hybrids – they are sterile.
 - a. Good idea to mark those F1 plants by tying a ribbon on.
16. Choose plants that you love to eat. That way even if there is a glut you will work your way through it.



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17. Succession sowing (every 2 weeks) is perfect to spread your crop out, stopping unwanted gluts.
18. Don't be afraid to try new varieties.
19. Be prepared Weed/ hoe every week. Part far enough apart so how will get between plants.
20. Don't forget herbs – many love the heat (but not coriander)
21. Grow only what you need unless you have lots of friends and family to take the extra. For example, 1 courgette plant will feed a family of 3 or 4 all summer.
22. Compost everything except pernicious weeds – try putting them in water to rot down or have an area where you can put them away from the garden.
23. Keep your tools clean to prevent spreading infections around the garden.
24. Try having a set just for the veg plot.
25. Use the white fleece to shade and protect both young and mature plants when necessary.
26. Use cloches to keep the pigeons off and retain water when appropriate.
27. Look at your water collection options now. If we have another very dry summer get ready for it now.
28. Reduce water evaporation by plant low growing crops to cover soil such as courgettes or squashes.
29. Perhaps look at using an Ollas – terracotta water vessel that the water seeps out of, sink in ground between the plants so plants can drink from it. Can use a terracotta pot where you have sealed the hole (cork or cement)
30. Shade your crops, if possible, in high temperatures. 4 stick and use white fleece.
31. Join a gardening club for access to expert advice and help, extra seeds and plants and seed swaps.

Veg that did well in the hot summer:

- Chillies,
- Peppers,
- Tomatoes
- French beans
- Potatoes – try growing in pots.
- Sweetcorn -use them to shade lower plants (3 sisters)



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- Cabbage
- Chard
- Courgettes (watering required) – 1 plant to a square metre.
- Squashes, pumpkins – vines so allow a lot of room and water.
- Kale especially Tuscan kale
- Lettuces – cut and come again (short growing season, ready to pick)
- Rocket

Herbs that have done well:

- Parsley
- Rosemary
- Basil (keep damp) or it will bolt.
- Chives – great in garden and seed on their own
- Coriander (but if you keep cool)
- Lemon Balm – loved the heat.
- Mint – grow in container – it's a thug.
- Sage – green sage can be a thug but requires no watering. Try Purple sage.

Seasonal Vegetables:

- Winter: leafy veg, Jerusalem artichokes, leeks, parsnips
- Spring: broad beans, asparagus, peas, salad leaves, globe artichoke
- Summer: tomatoes, peppers, aubergines, summer squash, sweetcorn, beans, potatoes, onions, cucumber
- Autumn: root veg, winter squash + last year I was picking tomatoes and chillies right through to November
- All year round: radish, cut and come again leaves.

Notes from meeting on March 14th 2023 “Planning a Vegetable Garden”, by Edwina Silver