



Your Vegetable Garden
Aide's Reference Sheet
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UNIT 3. CHOOSING VEGETABLES FOR THE GARDEN

Two Big Ideas

After this lesson, the family will:

1. Choose vegetables that fit the family's likes
2. Be able to read the seed package for important information on growing vegetables.

Facts Behind the Big Ideas

- The fun of having a garden is eating vegetables that are liked. Begin by planting vegetables that the family likes.
- It is easier for everyone to work in the garden if they like the vegetables.
- Vegetables need to fit into your family's garden space.

Small Vegetables (1-1 1/2 feet between rows)

Radishes	Spinach
Lettuce	Cabbage
Onions	Beets
Carrots	Greens

Large Vegetables (2-3 feet between rows)

Sweet Corn	Sweet Potatoes
Potatoes	Okra
Beans	Tomatoes—staked and pruned
Peas	

Very Large Vegetables (5-6 feet between rows)

Squash	Cucumbers
Pumpkin	Tomatoes—unstaked

- The vegetables that produce the most for the amount of space used are summer squash, carrots, beets, and turnips. One summer squash plant will produce enough for a family of four to enjoy fresh squash.
- Inexperienced gardeners will have more success with easy-to-grow vegetables.
- Easy-to-grow vegetables are:

Bush and pole beans	Onions
Beets	Pumpkin
Carrots	Radishes
Collards	Rutabaga
Corn	Spinach
Cucumbers	Squash
Kale	Swiss chard
Leaf lettuce	Turnips

- Talk to your family about growing vegetables that are expensive to buy. The fresh green vegetables are usually the most expensive to buy in the store because they spoil so quickly. These are collards, broccoli, tomatoes, lettuce, green onions, chard, radishes, cucumbers, beets, and turnip greens.

Vegetables that do not spoil quickly or are frozen and canned in large quantity are usually inexpensive all year. These are green beans, peas, corn, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, and turnips.

- The seed package has important information for growing vegetables. It tells:
 1. When to plant. Frost kills many plants and they must be planted after all danger of frost.
 2. How deep to plant the seed. Seeds that are planted too deeply cannot grow through the soil.
 3. How much distance to leave between plants and between rows. Plants need space to grow and crowding causes small plants to not produce as well.

What to Do Before the Meeting

1. Gather together:
 - Extra copies of Handouts 1 and 2
 - Handout 3
 - Pencils
2. Purchase or get some seed packages to show family.

Ways to Present the Big Ideas

- Ask your family to look at all the vegetables they listed on back of Handout 1. Add more vegetables or take some away as you and the family study the vegetables together.

- Check the list to see if the vegetables are large, medium, or small plants or vines, and using the garden map, figure out if there is space for large vegetables, or vines, or only enough space for small vegetables.
- Help your family fill in the garden map. Draw rows on the garden map. Write the name of the vegetable along the row. Tell your family about some important tips about a garden plan. Corn produces best when planted in three or four short rows instead of one long row. Tall plants need to be planted on the north or east side of the garden so they don't shade other small plants. Vine plants need five feet in all directions.
- Show your family some seed packets. Have them read the information on the back of the packet.

Tips for Saving Space in the Garden

- Plant quick-growing vegetables, like radishes, between slow-growing vegetables, like carrots, spinach, and corn. When the quick-growing vegetables are ripe and harvested, it will give the slow-growing vegetables room to grow.
- Grow green bean vines on a pole, stake or fence—or just for fun, make a teepee by leaning four poles together.
- Grow cucumbers and beans on a fence.
- Grow midget or dwarf varieties of vegetables.

How Will I Know What the Family Has Learned

The family will decide to plant vegetables that fit their likes and dislikes, and space. They will know how to read the seed package and be able to choose suitable vegetables from information on Handout 3.

Summary of What to Do With the Family

Ask if they thought about what they will plant in their garden.

Write or choose a list of favorite vegetables. Cross off or add new vegetables as you talk about what vegetables to grow.

Point out the vitamins and minerals in their favorite vegetables. Dark green, leafy and yellow-orange vegetables have vitamin A and iron. Tomatoes, green peppers, and broccoli have vitamin C.

Look at seed packages.

Find out:

- When to plant
- How deep to plant seeds
- How far apart to plant seeds
- How to take care of plants

Point out that different vegetables require different amounts of space. Will their favorite vegetables fit in the garden? This is important. Radishes require only a little space. Pumpkins require a lot of space.

Talk about easy-to-grow vegetables such as:

Bush and pole beans	Onions
Beets	Pumpkin
Carrots	Radishes
Collards	Rutabaga
Corn	Spinach
Cucumbers	Squash
Kale	Swiss chard
Leaf lettuce	Turnips

Look at Handout 3 for space-saving hints.

Talk about the vegetables that spoil quickly and so cost the most to buy, such as, collards, spinach, lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, green onions, and broccoli. Show on the chart the vegetables that cost most.

Fill in the garden map. Draw rows and write in vegetables.

The next step is preparing the soil. For this meeting a shovel or spade, rake, and some fertilizer is needed. Also remember to plan for an outdoor meeting.

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Assistance from Washington State University is available to all persons, without regard to race, color, or national origin.

