



Your Vegetable Garden  
Aide's Reference Sheet  
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## UNIT 5. PLANTING YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN

### The Big Idea

After this lesson, the family will know: for seeds to sprout and grow, the seeds need to be planted at the right time of the year, at the right depth, and with enough space between the plants.

### Facts Behind the Big Idea

- The temperature of the soil and air around a seed is important for seeds to sprout and grow. Some vegetables are strong and hardy, even in cold weather. These vegetables can be planted in early spring when there is still frost on the ground. Other vegetables are killed by cold and must have warm summer weather to grow.
- How deep into the ground to plant seeds depends on the size of the seeds. Seeds that are planted too deep cannot grow through the soil.
- All plants need room to grow. The distance between seeds or plants depends on how big the plant will become.

### Tips for Each Season of the Year

Cool weather vegetables—plant in early spring or summer. Broccoli, beets, cabbage, carrots, chard,

lettuce, mustard, peas, parsnips, potatoes, radishes, spinach, turnips, and onions.

Warm weather vegetables—plant after danger of frost in the late spring or early summer. Snap and lima beans, eggplant, New Zealand spinach, mustard, parsnips, squash, sweet corn, tomatoes, and melons.

Hot weather vegetables—plant in warm weather in late spring. All beans, squash, sweet corn.

Hardy vegetables for fall planting and growing in mild winters. Beets, collards, kale, lettuce, mustard, spinach, turnips, and carrots.

### Tips for Planting Seed

The rule to remember is to plant seeds three times deeper than the width of the seed.

Tiny seeds like lettuce, carrots, spinach, and onions are planted in a shallow groove 1/8 inch deep with a very little soil covering them. Plant about three to four seeds per inch—about the width of a pencil apart.

Medium-sized seeds like radishes, okra, and beets are planted 1/2 inch deep. The seeds are planted two to three per inch—about the width of a finger apart.

Large seeds: corn, beans, and squash are planted 3/4 to 1 inch deep. The seeds of corn and beans are planted three to four inches apart—about the width of a hand.

Vine vegetables like squash, pumpkin, melons, and cucumbers are planted in two ways. One way is to plant them three feet apart in rows. Another way is to plant three or four plants two or three inches apart in a group. Each group needs to be six feet away from the next group of plants.

### What to Do Before the Meeting

1. Gather equipment for the meeting:
  - Strings and sticks for marking rows
  - Measuring tape or rule for measuring distance between rows
  - Something to water the garden with
2. Ask your family to purchase their seed or small plants.

### Ways to Present the Big Idea

- Talk about the vegetables that grow in your area. Are there some vegetables that are not grown because it is too hot or cold?

### Marking Rows

- Show your family how to mark the rows for the seeds.
  1. Use garden map that was drawn in step two and three as a guide for where to plant. Measure off the rows according to map.
  2. Stretch a string between two sticks to mark a straight line. It does not matter if rows run north and south or east and west. By planting in a row, the garden will be easier to care for later in the summer.
  3. Mark furrows with the handle of your hoe or spade or your finger by drawing along the string. The furrows should be dry,

shallow (1/8 inch), 1/2 to 3/4 inch deep depending on what will be planted in the row.

### Sowing Seeds

- After all the rows are marked, show your family how to plant the seeds by placing them in the row and pressing the soil around them. Water the garden area with a fine mist—like rain water.

### Transplanting Small Plants

- Show your family how to transplant tender young plants.
  1. Dig small holes slightly deeper than the roots of the plant.
  2. Put the roots of the plant into the hole.
  3. Press soil around the roots.
  4. Handle the small plant with care. Protect the plant roots from sun and drying out by working rapidly, or covering with a damp paper towel.
  5. If possible, work in the evening or on a cloudy day. Plants will be less likely to wilt.
  6. Water after transplanting to firm the soil around the plant.

### Taking Care of New Plants and Seeds

- Tell your family to keep the ground around the seeds moist but not wet. Use a water can or hose. It may take a few days or two weeks for the seeds to sprout. If seeds do not sprout within two weeks, the seeds will need to be replanted—be sure to check to see that seeds were planted correctly.

### How to Know What's Learned

The family will be able to decide how deep to plant seeds by the size of the seeds and they will properly space their planting rows.

**Summary of Things to Do With the Family**

This is an outdoor meeting for sowing seed.

*Check* seed packages for time to plant, depth to plant seeds, and distance between seeds. Be sure this is the right time of the year to plant seeds.

*Show how* to stretch string between sticks to mark rows.

*Make* furrows for planting seed.

*Measure* distance between rows.

*Talk* about how deep to plant seeds.

*Measure* very shallow or 1/2 inch deep or 1 inch deep.

*Plant* seed in ground. Cover with soil to proper depth.

*Transplant* small plants.

*Water* newly planted seeds and transplants.

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

