UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County Presents
Develop a Vegetable Garden in a Small Backyard Setting

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Housekeeping

• Welcome

• EDC Master Gardeners, are volunteers trained by the University of California (90 hours training).

• The Master Gardener goal: educate our community about research-based horticulture.

• Sign in, Handout, Upcoming Class Schedule & Evaluation Form.

• Publications for sale.

• Our timetable/break/snacks/restrooms.

• Donations (help fund Sherwood Demonstration Garden).
Class Objectives

Review your available space.

Plan and develop your garden.

Review planting options.

Maximize harvest.

Integrating edibles into your landscape.
Topics For Today

1. Site Selection
2. Design Alternatives
3. Class Exercise
4. Site Preparation
5. Planting
6. Maintenance

Questions
1. Site Selection

Location  Location  Location!!!

East to West  Best Exposure

6 to 8 Hours of Sun

Easy Accessibility to hose outlet, tools, etc.

Close Proximity to your house
2. Design Alternatives

Set a Budget
  • How much do you want to spend?

In Ground

Garden Box
  • Wood, brick, sandbags
  • Beds 3’ wide 1’ deep

Straw Bale
  • Joel Karsten
  • bale conditioning 2 weeks

Integrate with Landscape
2. Design Alternatives (Cont’d)

Containers:
  • Light color pot best
  • Clay, plastic, fiber, ceramic
  • Must have drain holes
  • Sizes:

  Cucumber – 2 gallon (8 quart)

  Peppers – 2 - 4 gallon (8-16 quart)

  Tomatoes – 4 - 5 gallon (16-20 quart)

  Zucchini – 4 - 5 gallon (16-20 quart)

  Eggplant – 2 - 4 gallon (8-16 quarts)
Vegetable Growing in Small Space

Consider this:
The containers in this garden would take up less than 75 square feet of patio, deck or balcony space. We positioned the containers on a 6 by 20 foot balcony this way:

- Three 4 gallon size bell pepper plants produce 15 to 25 bell peppers.
- 72 beets plus beet greens
- Swiss chard—15 to 25 pickings
- Four 5 gallon tomato plants can produce 80 to 100 medium-sized tomatoes.
- Cucumbers: 4 plants (tied) on a trellis will produce about 120 cucumbers.

- Two boxes of pole snap beans; twelve plants would produce 12 pounds of beans.
- One plant of zucchini can produce 40 or more zucchini (6 per week for about 8 weeks).
- 24 turnips and 20 kohlrabi
- 72 green onions
- 82 carrots
3. Class Exercise

Draw a Plan of Your Garden Space

1 Square = 1 Foot
4. Site Preparation

Drainage
• Dig hole, fill with water, wait ½ hour

Soil Condition
• Clay, loam, sandy
• pH 5.5 - 7
• Soil test, lab or kit

Planting Mix
• Prepackaged or bulk
• 1/3 peat moss, 1/3 compost, 1/3 vermiculite
• L x W x H = Cu. Ft.
• Cu. Ft. / 27 = Cu. Yards
4. Site Preparation (Cont’d)

Amendments
- Compost
- Decomposed leaves

Fertilization
- Avoid heavy nitrogen
- Manure let stand for 3 weeks before planting

Watering Options
- Water by hose, bucket
- Wand - 5 gallons per min. depending on water pressure
- Drip, soaker hose
5. Planting

Last Freeze Date?
  • Planting guide
  • EDH April 15

Provide Protection from Cold
  • Row covers, walls of water
  • Cold frame

Plant Selection
  • What do you want to grow?
  • MG Plant Sale April 29th 8-5pm

Perennial vs Annual Plants
  • Berries, artichoke, asparagus
  • Lettuce, tomatoes, etc.
5. Planting (cont’d)

Start from Seed or Buy Plants?
- Seed requires time and patience
- Space for nursery
- Buy good quality plants

Maximize Food Production
- Bush type varieties
- Vegetables that produce multiple crops

Plan Placement According to Height
- Taller plants on north side

Layout Watering System at Planting Time
5. Planting (cont’d)

Provide Support, Cages, etc.
- Construction wire cages, 6” hole spacing, 24” in diameter
- Cukes, squash & melons grown vertically to save space

Square Foot Garden
- Mel Bartholomew
- Intensive gardening method

Keep a Detailed Planting Journal
- What worked, what didn’t
- What was planted where
6. Maintenance

Check Irrigation System Regularly
- Buy pressure compensating drips
- Drips will sometimes stop
- Animals like to chew on hoses

Keep Weeds Out
- Uses plant food and water

Mulch Plants
- Keeps soil cool and moist
- Keeps weeds from germinating
- 3” grass, straw or etc.
- Keep 6” from plant trunk
6. Maintenance

Protect Plants from Wildlife

- Bird Netting
- Plant Sunflowers nearby to keep the Goldfinches from eating your plant leaves
- Use screen or barrier on bottom of garden boxes to keep out voles and tree roots
An Old Chinese Proverb:

If you wish to be happy for a few hours, drink wine until your head spins pleasantly;

If you wish to be happy for a few days, get married and hide away;

If you wish to be happy for a week, roast a pig and have a feast;

If you wish to be happy all your life, become a gardener.
References


Interested in becoming a Master Gardener? Complete the Master Gardener Training Interest Online Form (on our website).
Thank You!

Any Questions?