

January 31, 2018



Planning a Spring and Summer Vegetable Garden
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UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

It will not be long before the dark, cold days of winter will be warming into spring. The time to start planning for spring and summer vegetables in the garden is now! Whether you have a large garden plot or just a few containers on the patio, you could be harvesting your own delicious and healthy produce in a few short months. Spend some time now on planning and preparation for a successful and rewarding vegetable garden.

Location is one of the most important things to consider when planning a garden. In order to thrive, most vegetables need 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight every day. Choose a sunny location with a water source nearby.

Here in El Dorado County, we are fortunate to have the right climate to grow a wide array of vegetables. When you think of a home garden, you might imagine crisp green peas, juicy red tomatoes, or giant zucchini. All of those things grow very well here, but there are many more possibilities! When planning your garden, take some time to make note of the vegetables that your family really enjoys eating. But, also be sure to try something new. Sit down with a seed catalog or visit one of our wonderful local nurseries and see what interesting or special variety catches your eye. How about growing some giant red mustard greens, okra, Persian cucumbers, purple carrots, or a Japanese turnip? Everything tastes better when it is freshly picked from your garden, so get creative!

Preparing the soil before planting seeds or vegetable starts is crucial to the health and vigor of the garden. Most vegetables do best in loose, well drained soil that contains plenty of organic matter. Adding compost to the soil is a good way to increase nutrients and loosen up soil that tends to be clayey and dense in many parts of our county. Building raised beds is another option in particularly difficult soil conditions.

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Whether you've been growing vegetables for years, or you are starting your first edible garden in 2018, you will find lots of resources, advice, and learning opportunities provided by the UCCE Master Gardeners. Just ask us!

Master Gardeners are presenting THREE classes in *early* February. Join Zack Dowell, who will discuss plant selection, planting times, site selection, soil preparation, seed planting techniques, and pest management for "Spring & Summer Vegetables" on February 3, 9:00 am to noon, at Government Center, Bldg C Hearing Room, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville. Later, on the same date will be Eve Keener in a workshop on "Pruning for that Fabulous Rose Display," 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, 6699 Campus Drive, Placerville. "Second Saturdays with Barry" continues on February 10, 10:00 am to noon at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden. Besides what's happening in the winter vegetable garden, this month's focus will be straw-bale gardening. Classes are free. Parking at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden is \$2.

For El Dorado County Gardeners, we also have a very useful "Foothill Vegetable Planting Guide." This excellent resource is a two-sided laminated calendar with adjustments for the differing elevations in our County. The Guide helps us determine the best times to plant different vegetables and when to expect harvests. Copies are available at the UCCE Master Gardener Office in Placerville and at our public education classes. The cost is \$5.

UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512). Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news. You can also find us on Facebook.