

Vegetable Gardening

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“Eating is an agricultural act.”

Wendell Berry

“What Are People For?”

Eat food.

Not too much.

Mostly plants.

Good Reading

Michael Pollan

“In Defense of Food”

Barbara Kingsolver

“Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A year of good food”

Why Grow Vegetables?

- Healthy plants grown in healthy soil are most nutritious.
- Vegetable gardening helps keep you in touch with the cycles of nature.
- You can grow varieties not available in the local super market.

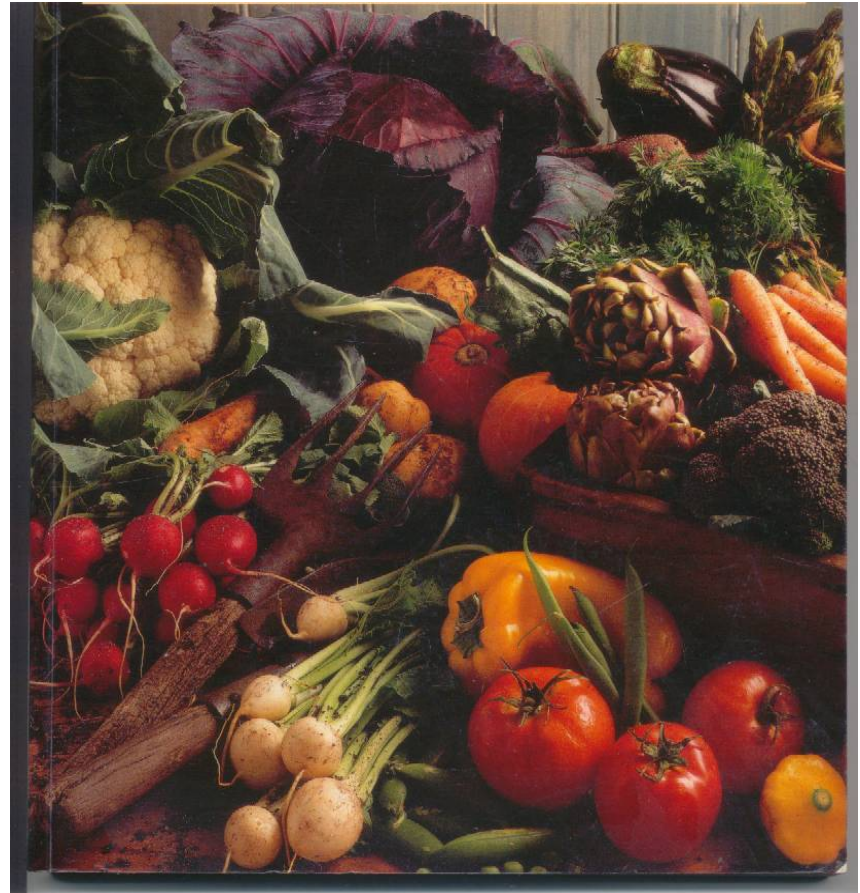
Who will do the work?

- Adults?
- Children?
- The hired man?



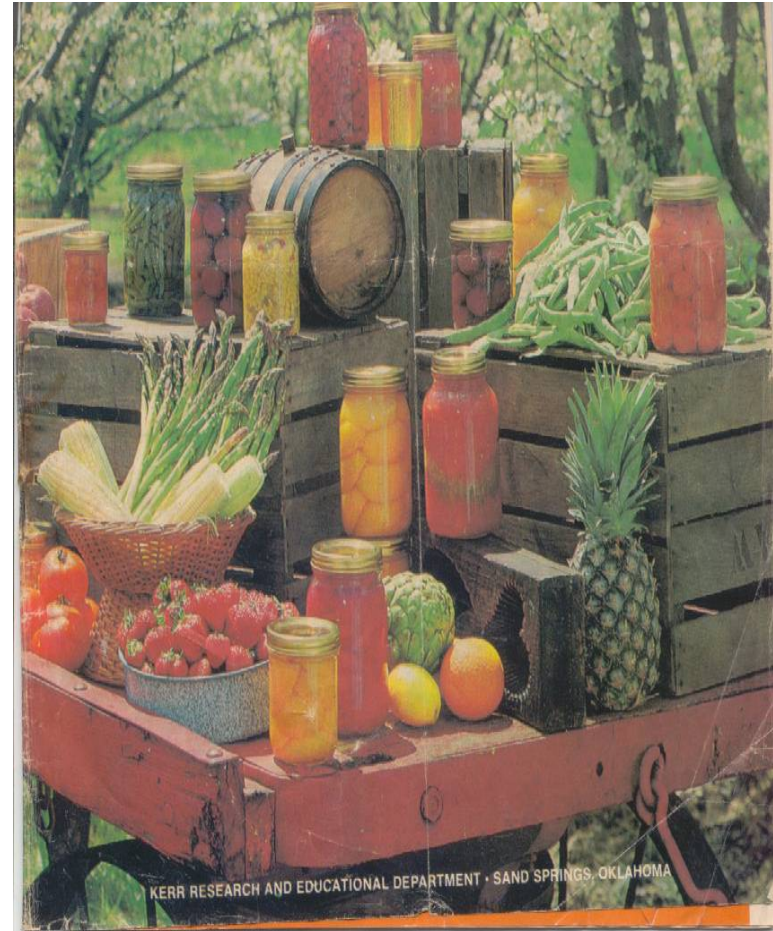
What does your family like to eat?

- Broccoli?
- Tomatoes?
- Carrots?



How much do you want to grow?

- Enough for canning?
- Enough for freezing?
- Enough for meals?



How much space is available?

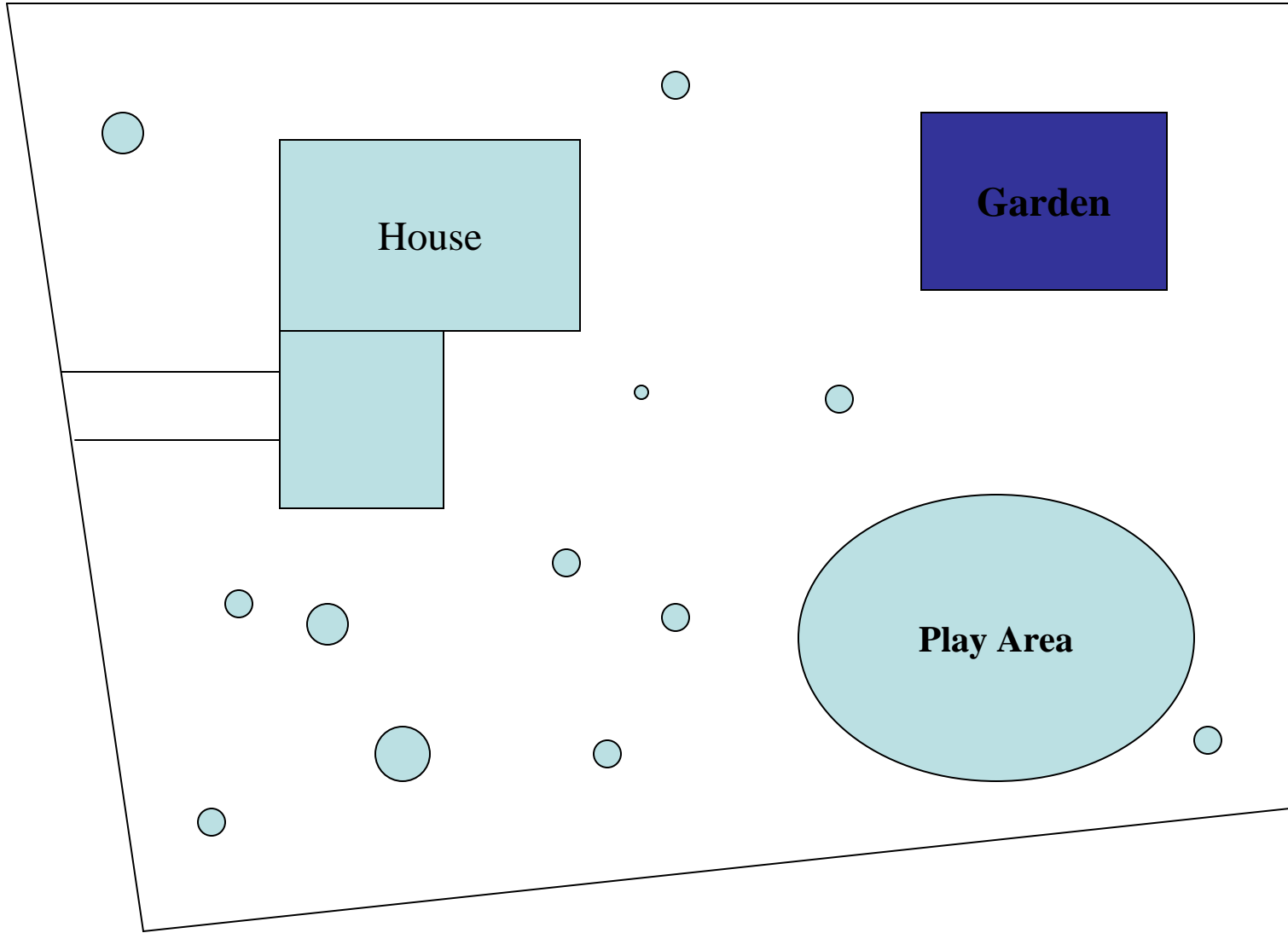
- One hundred square feet?
- 5,000 square feet?
- An acre?



Choosing A Site

- Be aware of microclimates
- Six hours of sunlight each day
- Avoid trees, shrubs, and traffic areas
- Look for deep, friable soil





Small Is Beautiful!

- Begin with a small plot and expand later.
- Even one hundred square feet can provide a family of three with fresh vegetables.
- Square Foot Gardening is a great way to begin.

The Classic with More Than 800,000 Copies Sold

SQUARE FOOT GARDENING

A New Way to Garden in
Less Space with Less Work



MEL BARTHOLOMEW

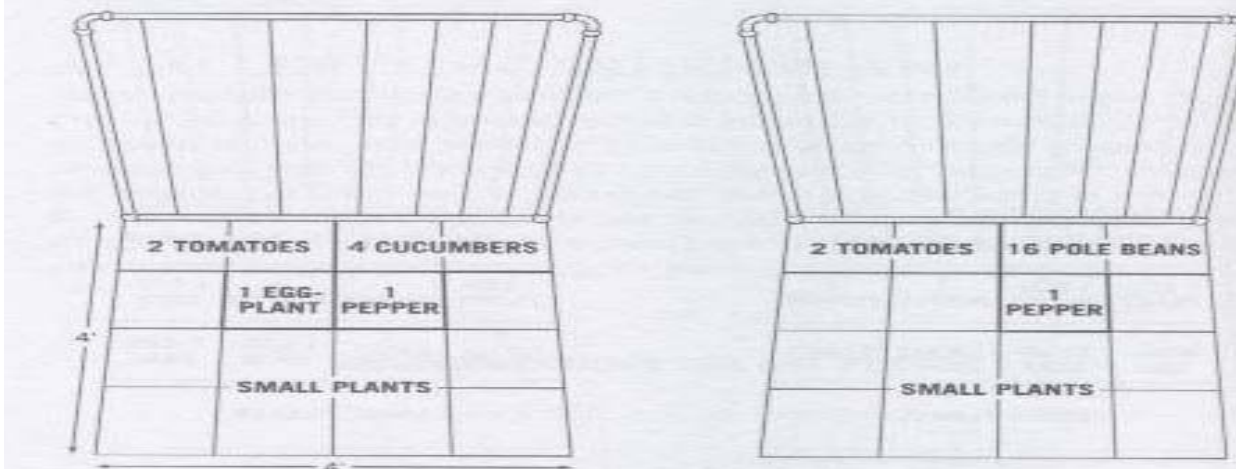
The Square Foot Garden



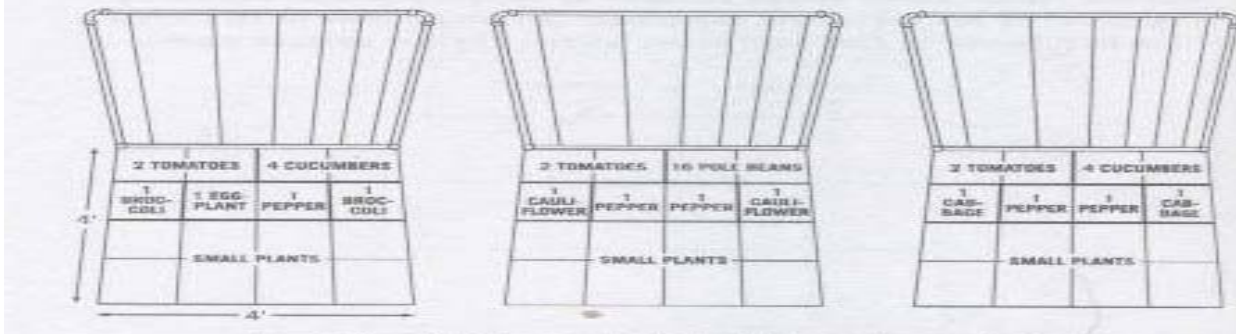
Any length--depends on material available.

Raised bed constructed with timbers, bricks, cinder blocks, etc. Filled with $\frac{1}{3}$ compost, $\frac{1}{3}$ vermiculite, $\frac{1}{3}$ peat moss, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pelleted limestone per square foot.

A Garden for Two People



For a small garden to supply two people with mostly small plants, you'll need two blocks with two vertical frames.



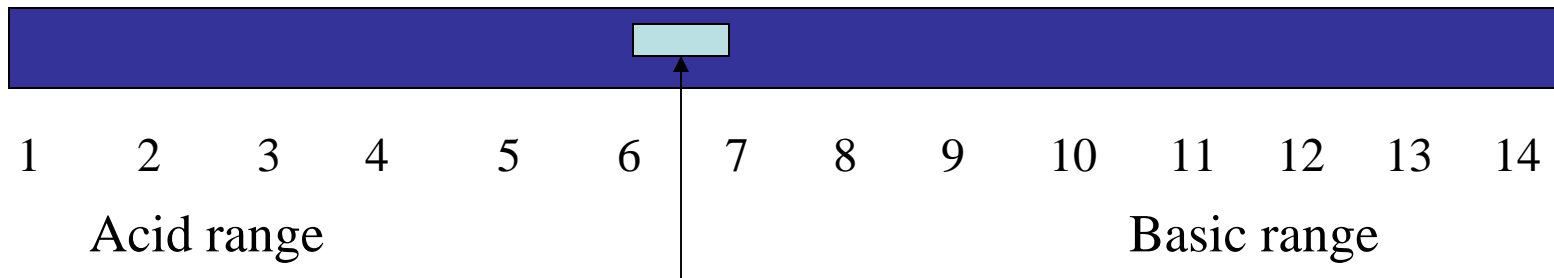
How many plants per square?

- 16 radishes, or carrots, or onions, or beets.
- 9 spinach, or leeks, or peas, or bush beans, or turnips.
- 4 lettuce, or kale, or pak choi, or Swiss chard, or parsley.
- 1 cabbage, or broccoli, or tomato, or potato, or cauliflower, or eggplant, or pepper.

Intensive Gardening

- Raised Beds--3 or 4 feet wide using boards or cinder blocks to retain soil,
- Trellises to save space--*cucumbers*
- Interplanting--*radishes and carrots*
- Wide rows to shade ground--*peas or beans*
- Succession planting--*beans to follow cabbage, or squash to follow spinach*

pH



A pH of 6.2 to 6.8 is ideal!

- On the pH scale, **7** is neutral.
- Add pulverized limestone to increase pH.
- Add sulfur to decrease pH.

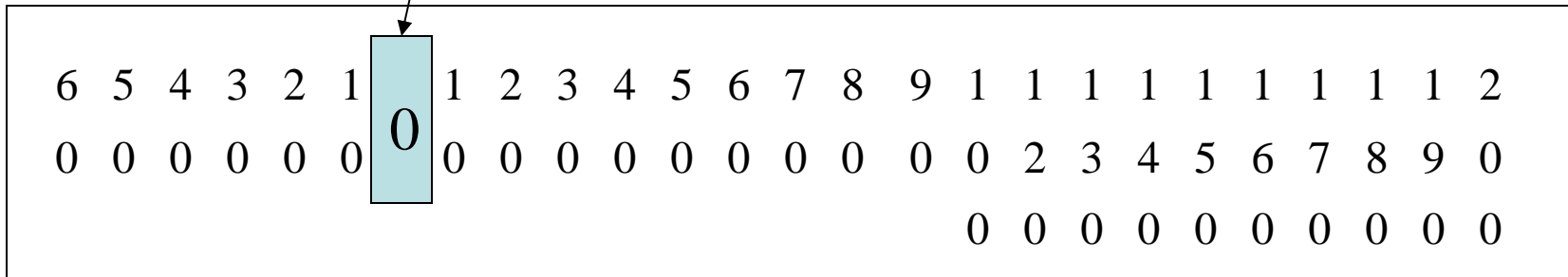
Why pH Is Important

- Most vegetables do best in slightly acid soil of pH 6.2 to 6.8.
- pH outside this range affects availability of essential nutrients.
- Plants stressed by growing at the wrong pH are more likely to attract insect damage.

Spring Planting Dates

Average last spring frost for your area.

Tidewater VA: April 1 to 21



Garden Peas



Beets



Pole beans



Plant



Harvest

From p. 301 of MG textbook

Growing Season

- Equals the number of frost free days:
 - Average last frost date in spring:
 - » **April 1 to 21**
 - Average first frost date in fall:
 - » **November 8 to 28**
 - Average number of frost free days:
 - » **230 day**
 - *Ref: MG Handbook, p. 300*

Starting Seeds Indoors

- Starting medium: *Vermiculite or a seed starting mix based on peat*
- Germination temperature of about 75 deg. F (*top of the waterheater is about right*)
- Pot up when first true leaves appear if using Vermiculite--then use dilute liquid fertilizer

It's the only way to grow.

- Shoplights: *bank of three suspended about 2" above the seedlings, 16 hr. on, 8 hr. off*
- Keep the soil moist.
- Water with soluble fertilizer weekly



Vegetables to Start Indoors

- Broccoli
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Eggplant
- Tomatoes
- Lettuce
- Peppers
- Swiss Chard
- Herbs
- Chinese Cabbage
- Celery

Plant These Vegetables Directly

- Pole Beans
- Bush Beans
- Lima Beans
- Peas
- Collards
- Spinach (spring & fall to winter over)
- Carrots
- Cucumber
- Melon
- Squash
- Kale
- Okra
- Corn
- Turnips
- Beets

Planting Out

- Harden seedlings off.
- Water seedlings ahead.
- Plant out late in afternoon or on cloudy day.
- Plant slightly below soil level--press soil firmly around roots.
- Water in with a cup of starter solution or compost tea.

Extending The Season

- Cold Frames are miniature greenhouses
 - Can be heated with tape
 - Plant lettuces in August for winter eating
- Cloches and tunnels for field crops
- Floating row covers
 - Provide 5 deg of frost protection
 - Keep insects and critters from tender crops

Examples of cold frames



And now for a few words
about

TOMATOES

Pot 'em up...keep 'em growing.



Plant 'em deep!

- Use a post hole digger.
- Go a foot or more down.
- This encourages root growth along the stem.
- Water in with a soluble fertilizer solution



Happy Gardening!