



Spring Vegetables and Herbs

Growing your own vegetables and herbs is the ultimate way of making dinner (or part of it) from scratch. And it's easier than you might think.

There are three primary elements in creating a successful vegetable and herb garden: site selection, soil preparation, and plant selection and care.

Site Selection

Consider two important factors: how much room you have and how much time and energy you have to care for your garden.

Your location should have good sun and drainage. Full sun all day is best, if not 5-7 hours.

Choose an open spot that has good air circulation.

Soil Preparation

Soil quality is critical to the success of your garden. Here's how to get your soil ready:

- Choose a location.
- Remove all weeds, debris and rock.
- Have your soil tested and follow the recommendations.
- Add well-composted organic matter. Till to a depth of 6 inches.
- Use expanded shale for heavy clay soils.
- Plant away from tall trees.



- Avoid low areas that puddle after heavy rain.

What to Plant

Make a list of the vegetables your family likes. Select the ones that are easier to grow, such as tomatoes, beans, peas, corn, squash, okra and cucumbers.

- Vegetables differ in their nutrient needs, planting times, dates to maturity and size. Follow the instructions that come with the plant or seeds.
- In this area, the last freeze usually occurs in the second week of March.

Herbs

For thousands of years, herbs have protected our health and flavored our foods.

- Herbs are typically divided into four categories: culinary, aromatic, medicinal and ornamental.
- An herb can be included in

more than one category.

- Most herbs need sunny areas with good air circulation.

To grow herbs, follow these instructions:

All herbs require a loose, crumbly soil that drains well. In Texas, herbs are best grown in raised beds or containers.

- Herbs make great container gardens.
- Herbs need average moisture and monthly feedings.

Once established, herbs are quite drought tolerant and can withstand periods of dry weather.

Themed Herb Gardens

Many people like to plant herbs according to a theme. Here are some of the more popular:

Culinary – includes basil, chives, garlic, and lavender.

Tea – includes basil, catnip, chamomile, dill, and fennel.

Fragrances – includes basil, lavender, marjoram, mint, oregano, rosemary, sage, and thyme.

Flowers – includes carnation, columbine, delphinium, foxglove, and narcissus.

Silver/Gray – includes aloe, lamb's ears, geranium, and yarrow.

Bees – includes catnip, fennel, and sage.

For more information and expert advice visit www.mytexasgarden.com



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