

Get the most from your plot

Ideally crops should be rotated within a plot so that the same plant family group is never in the same spot every year. This not only helps to keep soil nutrients at their optimum but also discourages soil based pests and diseases which are often attracted to crops within the same family group.

Firstly decide on the vegetables you enjoy, giving consideration to the amount of space available. Aim to produce vegetables all the year round without shortages or gluts. The area chosen should be divided into three equal sections.

Year 1 Section 1 - Dig in well rotted manure or compost in the autumn or early winter. In the first year grow Beans, Leek, Lettuce, Onions, Peas, and Tomatoes.

Section 2 - Dig the area over and add lime if the soil is acid. This can be checked by using a pH test kit or meter. Ideally maintain a pH level of between 6 and 7. A general fertiliser should be applied 10 to 14 days prior to planting or sowing. This area can then be used for growing Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbages, Cauliflower and Kale.

Section 3 - Apply general fertiliser prior to sowing and planting. The crops to be grown in this section include Beetroot, Carrots, Parsnips, Potatoes, and Swedes.

Year 2 As above moving all crops on one section.

Year 3 Crops and treatments are rotated once more so that all sections have grown all plants over a three year period before moving back to year 1 positions.

If this is not practical in your garden . . .
We show here the classic and well proven three year crop rotation plan. However, we realise that on smaller plots and when growing vegetables more informally in a mixed garden, this may be impossible to achieve. Even so, you should try to switch crops around to a different place each year, and avoid growing vegetables in the same group in the same area - this should still give some protection against a build up of crop specific pests and diseases in the soil.



Careful preparation of the soil can produce excellent results

COMPANION PLANTS

A number of plants can be grown together to help reduce attack by pest and disease. It may be necessary to experiment over a number of seasons to obtain the optimum planting density to provide some protection.

Growing Onions, Leeks and Carrots together will confuse the Carrot Fly and Onion Fly reducing the damage caused by these pests.

One of the most common pests found in the garden are the many types of Aphid. The larvae of the Hoverfly will eat large quantities of Aphid and to encourage Hoverflies into the garden grow *Convolvulus Minor* and *Limnanthes Douglasii* (Poached Egg Flower).

Growing Basil, Chilli Peppers and French Marigolds amongst Tomatoes will help to reduce pest attacks. In the greenhouse Whitefly is a very troublesome pest of Tomatoes and growing French Marigolds by the door and near ventilators is said to be beneficial.

Inter-planting brassicas with Dwarf French Bean and French Marigold will help to reduce pest attacks.

Companion planting can also be used to improve pollination by attracting pollinating insects. Pollination of Runner Beans can sometimes be disappointing and growing Ipomoea (Morning Glory) or Sweet Peas in the row will attract pollinating insects.



Combine flowers and vegetables in a traditional-style 'potager'

	Manure or Compost	Fertilisers and Lime*	Fertilisers
PLOT IN THE FIRST YEAR	Section 1 of plot	Section 2 of plot - Brassicas	Section 3 of plot - Roots
	Peas	Cabbages	Potatoes
	Beans	Sprouts	Carrots
	Onions	Cauliflowers	Beetroots
	Leeks	Kales	Parsnips
	Lettuces	Broccoli	Swedes
	Tomatoes	Seed bed for Green Crops	Succession Crops
	Spinach	Succession Crops	Spinach
	Spinach Beet	Onions	Lettuces
	Celery		
Succession Crops			
Carrots			
Beetroots			
Cabbages			
PLOT IN THE SECOND YEAR	Fertilisers and Lime*	Fertilisers	Manure or Compost
	Section 1 of plot - Brassicas	Section 2 of plot - Roots	Section 3 of plot
	Cabbages	Potatoes	Peas
	Sprouts	Carrots	Beans
	Cauliflowers	Beetroots	Onions
	Kales	Parsnips	Leeks
	Broccoli	Swedes	Lettuces
	Seed bed for Green Crops	Succession Crops	Tomatoes
	Succession Crops	Spinach	Spinach
	Onions	Lettuces	Spinach Beet
		Celery	
		Succession Crops	
		Beetroots	
		Cabbages	
PLOT IN THE THIRD YEAR	Fertilisers	Manure or Compost	Fertilisers and Lime*
	Section 1 of plot - Roots	Section 2 of plot	Section 3 of plot - Brassicas
	Potatoes	Peas	Cabbages
	Carrots	Beans	Sprouts
	Beetroots	Onions	Cauliflowers
	Parsnips	Leeks	Kales
	Swedes	Lettuces	Broccoli
	Succession Crops	Tomatoes	Seed bed for Green Crops
	Spinach	Spinach	Succession Crops
	Lettuces	Spinach Beet	Onions
	Celery		
	Succession Crops		
	Beetroots		
	Cabbages		

*Only lime if soil is known to be acid - a simple test kit can check this.

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