

All About **A+** Summer Garden

Congratulations on being involved with how food is grown! Growing a vegetable garden is an empowering activity for all ages. It allows for all involved to be part of growing and supplying nutritious vegetables for family and friends. Vegetable gardening is good exercise and saves money on household food expenses.

Preparing My Garden

Planning and preparation are essential for a good gardening experience. Select a 4ft x 12ft location in a sunny location in the yard. Be sure a garden hose will reach the garden area to make watering the soil easy. Don't have a water hose or water hydrant close by? A large watering can will serve the same purpose. Dampening the soil several inches deep will soften the soil, making it easier to work with.

Preparing the soil. If your garden area is covered in sod (or grass), skim the sod and remove. If you would like to start a compost pile at one end of your garden, place the removed sod in the location of your new compost pile. One bag of compost has been included in the A+ Summer Garden package. Evenly spread the compost on the garden location and mix into the soil with a shovel or digging spade (this will take a bit of muscle to accomplish)! Compost provides many natural benefits to a garden. The deeper you are able to loosen the soil, the better aeration you will have for your growing plants. Water the newly churned soil so it is damp several inches deep. Most soils in our area have a low pH. To raise the pH to between 6.5 and 7.0, the preferred level for most vegetables, you will need to add lime. A soil test should be taken to determine the proper amount of lime needed for your garden (visit www.hgic.umd.edu for soil testing information). Using the shovel or pitch fork, use a twisting motion to break up any soil clods while working in the compost along with any soil additives (such as lime) into the top 4" of soil. Smooth the plot with a rake and you are ready to plant your garden.

How to Plant My Garden

Spacing is key. Each vegetable has different spacing requirements (scan QR codes for spacing recommendations). Provide plenty of space in-between plants when planting because when plants become mature and begin producing vegetables, more space is needed for growing vegetables! When handling transplants, handle from the base of the plant and keep as much soil material with the roots when placing the transplant into the garden. If the stem is handled with too much force, it may break and kill the plant – be gentle when handling. Plant in rows.

Keeping the Garden Alive & Growing

Watering the garden daily is crucial for vegetables to survive the summer heat! The best time to water a garden is early in the morning or late evening to avoid water evaporation from summer temperatures.

Harvesting Vegetables

Each type of vegetable ripens differently (scan QR code for vegetable). Handle gently when picking off the vine or stem. Vegetables should have a good color and texture when ready to harvest.

Helpful Resources

A+ Garden Center - <http://aplusgardencentre.weebly.com/>

Wicomico Extension Office - <http://extension.umd.edu/wicomico-county> or 410-749-6141

Home & Garden Info Center - <http://extension.umd.edu/growit/vegetable>



Bell Peppers



Tomatoes



Squash



Cucumbers



Green Beans

Scan QR Codes with a Smart Phone for Individual Vegetable Variety Information