

Garden planting season is just around the corner!! I don't know about you, but this is my favorite time of year. After a long winter, the thought of fresh vegetables from my garden makes me happy. Home gardening has continued to grow in popularity. Texas gardeners can produce a wide variety of tasty and nutritious vegetables. To be a successful gardener you will need to follow a few basic rules and make practical decisions. Here are a few tips that you can do now to prepare to raise your own garden this year.

Garden Site Selection

Although many urban gardeners have little choice, selecting a garden site is extremely important. The ideal garden area gets full or nearly full sunlight and has deep, well-drained, fertile soil. The garden should be near a water outlet, but not close to competing shrubs or trees. However, if you modify certain cultural practices and select the right crops, almost any site can become a highly productive garden.

Crop Selection

You will want to grow vegetables that return a good portion of nutritious food for the time and space they require. Vine crops such as watermelons, cantaloupes, winter squash and cucumbers need large amounts of space, but if you plant them near a fence or trellis you may need less space for vine crops – many will grow on a trellis and still produce. Plant the vegetables your family will enjoy most. Resist the urge to plant more of any particular vegetable than you need, unless you plan to preserve the surplus or share with your friends.

At this time of year, you can go ahead and plant your cool season vegetable seed/root like: Asparagus, green beans, lettuce, beets, cabbage, carrots, and radishes. You may need to watch the weather closely as they sprout. My rule of thumb is to wait until after Mother's Day to feel "safe" on a freeze. Be prepared to cover your fresh sprouts until then.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Megan Eikner
CEA – Ag/NR
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension – Potter County