



# Vegetable Gardening in Texas

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*Plano Stake - Emergency Preparedness Fair  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
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# Introduction

- Began Vegetable Gardening in 1999
- Raised 20+ Spring and 15+ Fall gardens
- Most Gardens have been very successful
- Plano Profile (Feb 2013, Mar 2014)
- My Experience growing up
- Blessings from the Lord
- This Class: gardening “principles” – many will apply to various types of gardens
- Disclaimer – MY way; NOT “only way” nor “best way”

# Why Consider Gardening ?

- Enjoyment
- Therapeutic
- Better Food Taste
- Better Food Quality
- Improved Health
- Fewer Pesticides
- Saves Money
- Stronger Relationships
- Reinforces Spiritual Principles
- Instills Values
- Increases Self-Reliance

*Additionally... growing and preserving food can be an important component of an overall preparedness plan!*

# Spiritual Principles Reinforced

- Reaping & Sowing
- Laboring & Harvesting
- Diligence vs Negligence
- Life & Death
- Fruitful & Unfruitful
- Planning & Preparation
- Consequences
- Responsibility
- Proactivity vs Procrastination
- Creation
- Understanding the Adversary

❖ **Better Perspective on the Lord as the “Master Gardener” in our lives --**  
Nurturing plants, Pruning them when necessary, Guiding them to grow certain ways, Being aware of each individual plant, etc.

❖ **Parables become more meaningful** (e.g. Sower, Wheat and Tares, etc.)

# Church Leaders on Gardening

*“We encourage you to grow all the food you feasibly can on your own property. Berry bushes, grapevines, fruit trees—plant them if your climate is right for their growth. Grow vegetables and eat them from your own yard.”*

-- President Spencer W. Kimball, May 1976

*“We are highly pleased with the response to the planting of gardens. It is health-building, both from the raising of crops and the eating of them. It is delightful to see so many gardens all over the land ... we hope this will be a permanent experience of our people, that they will raise much of what they use on their table.”*

-- President Spencer W. Kimball, Nov. 1977

*“The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah.”*

-- President Ezra Taft Benson, Nov. 1980  
(U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for Dwight D. Eisenhower)

# Tips for Gardening Success ...

1. Good Resources (books, catalogs, people, web sites, garden centers, county extension services, etc.)
2. Choosing the best Garden (Site, Size, Structure, Supports)
3. Creating great soil
4. Good watering system with proper drainage
5. Sufficient sunlight
6. Growing the best things at the best times of the year
7. Knowing Thine Enemy (pests, diseases, weather, etc.)
8. Record Keeping
9. Prayer (Alma 34:18-29, Matthew 21:22)
10. Plant a Fall Garden also (cooler temps, less watering, less effort, fewer bugs, etc.)

# Utilizing Resources (samples)

- Books:
  1. The Garden Primer (Barbara Damrosch)
  2. Complete Guide to Texas Gardening (Neil Sperry)
  3. An Illustrated Guide to Organic Gardening (Sunset)
  4. Ball Blue Book (Guide to Home Canning, Freezing, and Dehydration)
- Plants & Seeds & Supplies:
  1. Park Seed ([www.parkseed.com](http://www.parkseed.com))
  2. Calloway's Nursery (Plano)
  3. Wells Brothers (Plano)
- Soils & Composts:
  1. Living Earth Technologies (Split Trail Road – Plano, TX)
  2. City of Plano (9901 Custer Road (at Ridgeview))
- Additional Resources: people, web sites, county extension services, etc.

# Garden Structure & Supports

- Raised Beds are well-suited for North Texas – better drainage, deeper plant roots, etc.
- Example Materials: Landscape Timbers, Stones, Cinder Blocks, Lumber, etc.
- Country / Farmland: Raised rows (tractor)
- Tomato Cages & Trellises (Welded Wire)
- Tomato Enclosure (Hardware Cloth)



# Creating Great Soil

- *“To the uninitiated, gardening seems to be all about plants. . . but to the initiated, it’s really all about soil”* (remember the Parable of the Sower)
- Clays soils are nutrient-rich but need to be lightened. Clay compacts making it difficult for plant roots to penetrate deeply, its small particles prevent good air spaces, and it drains poorly so roots rot
- **Adding organic matter / “humus” (e.g. compost) regularly:**
  - 1) Adds nutrients to the soil and brings it to life
  - 2) Discourages clay particles from sticking together tightly so roots can penetrate
  - 3) Creates larger spaces in the soil that drain more easily and hold essential air
  - 4) The Humus itself retains moisture so requires less watering
  - 5) Supports micro-organisms that convert soil nutrients to a form plant roots can use
  - 6) Supports microbes that attack and control disease pathogens in the soil
  - 7) Attracts Earthworms (“nature’s tillers”) who’s castings leave soil richer
- **Till soil deeply, then add a layer of compost/humus, and till all together. A few times per season, I may fertilize with Liquid Fish & Seaweed.**
- Additional Idea: Blender Composting

# Watering System

- Soaker hoses a great way to water (max 100 ft. at a time)
- Benefits of using Soaker Hoses:
  1. Use less water -- only waters where needed; no runoff
  2. Waters deeply promoting plant root growth and, as a result, drought tolerance
  3. Less evaporation of water
  4. Keeps plant foliage dry which reduces chance of disease
  5. Very simple / Saves time
- Water when needed – not necessarily by the calendar
- Hand water softly until seeds germinate and plants have sufficient roots (usually a few weeks)
- Water Conservation: “shower bucket” idea

# What to Plant (Tips)

- Plant what your family likes and will eat
- Consider **Heat-tolerant** and **Disease-resistant** varieties
- **Small to Medium fruit** does best in the heat
- Consider smaller **“bush” varieties** of some veggies (e.g. bush beans) for the limited space of most home gardens
- Consider buying seeds from a good seed company (e.g. Park Seed) – request FREE catalogs at [www.parkseed.com](http://www.parkseed.com)

# What to Plant (Spring Garden)

## My “SPRING” Favorites

Tomatoes

Cucumbers

Peppers

Corn

Green Beans

Squash & Zucchini

Some people like: Okra, Eggplant, etc.

- ❖ My Planting Dates: I usually plant around 1<sup>st</sup> wk. of April
- ❖ Plants: Tomatoes and Peppers
- ❖ Seeds: All others (sown directly in the garden)
- ❖ Tomato Planting Tip – stronger roots, better drought-tolerance

# What to Plant (Fall Garden)

## My “FALL” Favorites

Broccoli

Cauliflower

Cabbage

Spinach

Lettuce

Carrots

Beets

Some people like: “Greens” (Mustard, Collard, Turnip), Radishes

- ❖ My Planting Dates: I usually plant around mid September
- ❖ Plants: Broccoli, Cauliflower, Cabbage
- ❖ Seeds: All others (sown directly in the garden)
- ❖ Beet Planting Tip – soak seeds in a moist paper towel for 24 hours just before planting

# Know Thine Enemy

- Bugs, Diseases, and bad weather are a reality **(2 Nephi 2:11)**
- Understand which bugs attack the plants you will grow, watch carefully and regularly for signs of them, and apply appropriate solution to encourage them to “move on to the after-life”
- **Spring**: spider mites, cucumber beetles, squash borer, and squash bug. Usually controlled with Neem oil and hand harvesting
- **Fall**: cabbage worms, cabbage loopers, and aphids. Controlled by hand harvesting or using BT Worm Killer or Neem oil
- One of my Organic Gardening books shows beautiful color pictures of bad garden insects (rogues) and good garden insects (allies). This has been very helpful to me

# Record Keeping

- Keep detailed records of each garden – helps you see patterns, learn from mistakes, rotate garden items, etc.
- Sketch the garden (what planted and where)
- Record varieties planted, planting dates, harvest dates, harvest amounts, mistakes made, lessons learned, results, and any other notes that could be helpful later
- Always create the detailed plan for your next Spring garden immediately after this Spring garden is done while it's still fresh in your mind and the garden is fully grown (same with Fall garden)

Vegetable	Variety	Qty.	Plant Date	1st Harvest	Total Harvest	Notes
<b>Tomatoes</b>	Early Girl	4 plants	15-Apr	17-Jun	176	
	Husky Red Cherry	1 plant	15-Apr	10-Jun	114	
<b>Corn</b>	Legend Hybrid	84 plants	18-Apr	26-Jun	73	Harvested 66 on 6/26 + 7 more on 6/29
<b>Cucumbers</b>	Eureka Hybrid	6 plants	18-Apr	24-Jun	142	August: pickled 7 Qts. + 14 pints
<b>Green Beans</b>	Kentucky Wonder Bush	24 ft.	20-Apr	None	0	
<b>Squash</b>	Enterprise Hybrid (Yellow Straightneck)	2 plants	18-Apr	6-Jun	20	
	Sunburst Hybrid (Pattypan)	2 plants	18-Apr	12-Jun	15	
	Green Whopper Improved (Zucchini)	1 plant	18-Apr	5-Jun	5	
<b>Peppers</b>	Big Bertha (Green Bell)	3 plants	13-Apr	5-Jun	96	Total Bell Peppers = 264
	Whopper (Green Bell)	3 plants	13-Apr	27-May	64	Froze 14 Quart Bags of Bell Pepper pieces (various varieties) at season end
	Better Belle (Green Bell)	1 plant	13-Apr	30-May	18	
	California Wonder (Red Bell)	2 plants	13-Apr	2-Jul	61	
	Golden Bell	1 plant	13-Apr	16-Jul	13	
	Orange Valencia (Bell)	1 plant	13-Apr	4-Jul	3	
	Chocolate Bell	1 plant	4-May	29-Jul	9	
	Sweet Banana	3 plants	13-Apr	27-May	192	Froze enough at end of season for 8 future Banana Pepper Dips
<b>Watermelon</b>	Whopper	1 plant	4-May	3-Aug	1	Experiment only. Just threw it in the sandbox w/ a little soil & compost