



Vegetable Gardening Needs For San Antonio

The following are basics needed for a successful start to vegetable gardening. Individual vegetables will have specific growing requirements, but if you start with these basics, you are on the right path.

Basic Vegetable Garden Needs: Sun, Soil Depth, Soil Quality, Soil Drainage, Correct Timing, Spacing, Air Circulation, Water, and Fertilizer

1. Sun: Most vegetables require 8 hours of full sunlight to healthily grow, blossom, and fruit. There is not really a way to get around that.

-Vegetables grown in too much shade might still produce vegetative growth, but you might not get any fruit. Plants may grow tall and lanky reaching for the sun, as opposed to lush and full

2. Soil Depth: Vegetables need 12-15 inches of soil (preferably more). This is the standard depth of soil needed to grow veggies successfully. Sometimes it's hard to dig to that depth with our limestone; that's why many San Antonio gardeners choose to build raised beds.

3. Soil Quality: The more you can amend your soil with quality products, the better your vegetable production will be.

-In Ground Gardens: Start by rototilling the ground to a depth of least 10-12 inches. Add 5 or 6 inches of a mix of organic materials (peat moss, fine compost, fine soil conditioner) and till again to thoroughly mix products along with the soil. Tilling loosens soil to allow roots of vegetables to more easily penetrate through.

-Raised Bed Gardens: Raised bed garden can be comprised of many materials (treated wood, landscape rocks, concrete blocks, etc...) You will need to build up to create a raised bed at least 12-15" tall. You can buy pre-bagged raised bed soil and just fill it up, or create your own mix using 1/3 garden soil, 1/3 compost, and 1/3 peat moss. Best results come by using quality products.

4. Soil Drainage: Make sure the site for your vegetable garden isn't in an area where water tends to pool up or collect run-off. Other than that (and that is very important), if you stick to the advice in bullet #3, drainage shouldn't be a problem.

5. Correct Timing: In San Antonio, we basically have two short growing seasons, spring and fall. To be successful in both seasons you must plant at recommended planting times. It won't matter how good your soil is, how much you water, etc... if you plant the wrong crop at the wrong time, it won't work.

-You can find our veggie planting calendar on our website, rainbowgardens.biz, under our Learning Center Tab on the front page.

6. Spacing and Air Circulation: Correctly spacing your vegetables at planting time will give them adequate room to grow and perform their best. This will also allow air to circulate freely throughout your plants.

-You will need to know how large each of your vegetable plants will be at maturity, and give enough space to allow for that when planting multiple veggies in your garden. Poor air circulation can lead to issues with disease.

7. Water: There are too many variables to be able to give an across the board recommendation for how much to water your garden. These include: natural rainfall, wind, temperature, soil type, etc... You will need to learn how to assess when your garden needs water based on these variables.

-General tips: When the surface of the soil is dry to the touch, you can poke your finger in and feel for moisture. None? Water. Moisture? Wait to water. When you water, water deeply and focus on the roots rather than spraying lightly on the foliage.

-Extra tip: Thoroughly water your garden a day or two before planting. Also make sure your transplants are watered and not dried out before planting.

8. Fertilizer: Water you veggies in with a diluted soluble fertilizer at planting. Follow up with a granular fertilizer around 2-3 weeks after they have been actively growing. Always follow application instructions on product bag and water in fertilizer after applying. We carry multiple brands of vegetable fertilizers, come see us and let us help you pick out the right one for your needs.