

Start a vegetable garden in three steps



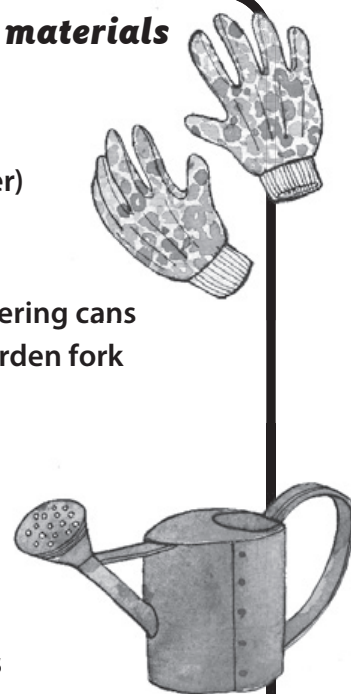
Spring is here. It's time to get your hands in the dirt. Get out your garden tools and beautify your surroundings!

Starting a garden involves planning, preparing the soil and planting. Planting is usually done in late May, after all risk of frost has passed, and ideally on a cloudy day.

Useful tools and materials

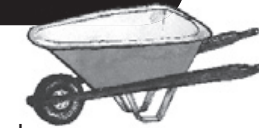
- Gloves
- Wheelbarrow
- Dibble (hand planter)
- Rake
- Hand cultivator
- Garden hose or watering cans
- Garden spade or garden fork
- Dandelion weeder
- Stakes and trellises
- Compost
- Hen manure
- Mulch
- Pencil
- Identification labels
- Potting soil*
- Water storage bins*

*For containers only



If you have a conventional vegetable garden (in the ground)

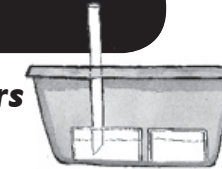
Step 1—Prepare the soil



- ✓ Remove weeds by hand, with a garden fork, or with a dandelion weeder.
- ✓ Loosen up the earth with a spade or garden fork to a depth of 50 cm (20 in) to aerate the soil well.
- ✓ Add compost, mixing it into the soil with a garden fork (approximately 1 35-L bag per square metre of soil).
- ✓ Add hen manure to the first 10 cm (4 in) of soil.
- ✓ Rake the earth to level it out.

If you have a container garden

Step 1—Prepare your containers



Year 1

Set up the containers

- ✓ Assemble your containers according to the instruction manual.
- ✓ Arrange the containers in your garden space.

Add the substrate

- ✓ Mix equal parts of compost and potting soil.
- ✓ Add hen manure to a depth of 10 cm (4 in).

Year 2 and subsequent years

Arrange your containers in your garden space

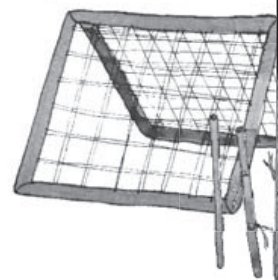
Make sure the double-bottom structure is intact and properly positioned and that the water reservoir underneath is empty.

- ✓ Remove 10% to 20% of the soil from the bins along with any large roots.
- ✓ Prepare a mixture of 80% compost and 20% perlite and dig it into the earth from the previous year.
- ✓ Add hen manure to a depth of 10 cm (4 in).

After 3 or 4 years, empty your containers completely and fill them with a new mixture.

Stakes and trellises

- Some plants, such as tomatoes, need to be supported so they can grow properly.
- Other plants, such as pole beans, cucumbers and sugar peas, need a structure to climb.
- Climbing plants will naturally attach to a trellis; all you have to do is guide them from time to time. However, tomato plants have to be attached to their stakes. Cut up panynthose work well for this.
- This flexible material does not cut into the stem.
- Use your imagination to come up with ways to support your plants while they are growing.



Step 2—Planting seedlings

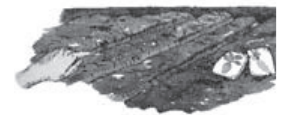


Plant your plants according to the layout of your garden and your garden plan. For help with your planning, refer to the *Seasonal Calendar* and the *Companion Planting* pamphlet.

- ✓ Dig a hole slightly bigger than the seedling pot.
- ✓ Remove the seedling from the pot and place it straight into the hole.
- ✓ Push the soil back around the seedling and tamp it down gently.
- ✓ Spread 2 to 3 cm (approx 0.75 to 1.2 in) of mulch around the plants.
- ✓ Water the surface well (for containers, the next time you water, use the hose connected to the reservoir).
- ✓ Install stakes and trellises.

Make sure that you leave enough space between the seedlings so they have room to grow and that you plant them at the right time. Consult the Seasonal Calendar for more details.

Step 3—Sowing seeds



- ✓ Make a furrow (a long trench in the soil).
- ✓ Drop the seeds in, keeping them the right distance apart.
- ✓ Cover the seeds with soil and tamp it down lightly to make sure the seed and the soil come into contact. The thickness of the soil covering a seed should only be twice the size of the seed.
- ✓ Place identification labels at the ends of rows.
- ✓ After a few days, you will need to thin out any sprouts that are too close together.
- ✓ Water the surface well (for containers, the next time you water, use the hose connected to the reservoir).
- ✓ Spread 2 to 3 cm (approx 1 in) of mulch after the seeds germinate (1 to 2 weeks before you see the first leaves).
- ✓ Install stakes and trellises.

Mulch

Mulch is recommended to reduce water evaporation and weed growth. It also moderates soil temperatures so that micro-organisms and earthworms remain active longer. Mulch gradually breaks down and releases nutrients into the soil.

Mulch can be made from a number of different things:

- ✓ Dead leaves
- ✓ Straw
- ✓ Wood shavings (preferably wood chips)
- ✓ Cocoa husks
- ✓ Newsprint (no coloured ink), cut into strips

