

Planting your vegetables

Now is the time for serious work on your vegetable garden. The most successful gardens are planned well ahead of time, says Ontario ministry of agriculture and food horticulturist R.F. Gomme.

Once you have chosen a convenient site with suitable soil, good surface drainage and natural protection, planting preparations begin.

Before planting any vegetables the site must be well prepared with soil-enriching fertilizers, such as well-rotted manure, compost and leaf mold.

This will become well

Gardening

worked in once spring cultivation begins, loosening up the winter rain- and snow-packed soil.

Then, the soil should be thoroughly broken down, to ensure a firm seedbed. There are several techniques to aid people with small gardens to make the most use of their plots.

It is not necessary to plant all your vegetables in rows. Rectangles and squares work just as well

and save space. Or you could plant your crops just far enough apart so that the outer leaves touch when they reach maturity.

Garden fences, if near your vegetable garden, act as excellent supports for climbing beans, peas or cucumbers.

Saving space Companion planting is also a good way to save space. It means planting two crops in the same area — for example,

small globe-shaped radishes, leafy lettuce and spinach between rows of beets, carrots and parsnips.

Vegetable gardens do not have to be in the ground; they can also be grown in containers, such as buckets or window boxes, says Gomme. Remember, though, to drill holes in the bottom of the containers to provide proper drainage.

Container vegetables should be given the

equivalent of one inch of rain each week while they are growing. Be careful not to overwater, warns Mr. Gomme, or you will smother the roots and kill the plants.

The Ontario ministry of agriculture and food has prepared an informative new book, publication 64, "Insect Disease and Weed Control in the Home Garden," which costs 50 cents per copy.

To order, send a cheque or money order payable to the Treasurer of Ontario, to Information Branch, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Parliament Buildings, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A5.

Summer care for bulbs

With the unseasonably warm weather during the first part of April, spring-flowering bulbs have grown very quickly and blossomed early this year.

Producing those masses of leaves and flowers takes a lot of energy out of the bulbs, which means they need help to be revitalized.

"After blooming, an

application of a complete fertilizer, such as 10-10-10, will help encourage continued growth and replenishment of the bulb," says J.K. Hughes, a horticulturist with the Ontario ministry of agriculture and food.

The leaves are important for the continued growth of the plant and should not be removed until the foliage yellows

and begins to die.

If leaves are removed too early, bulb development is stopped and the quality of the display can be affected.

When the leaves begin to die, they should be removed from the beds and destroyed, to prevent possible disease problems in the soil.

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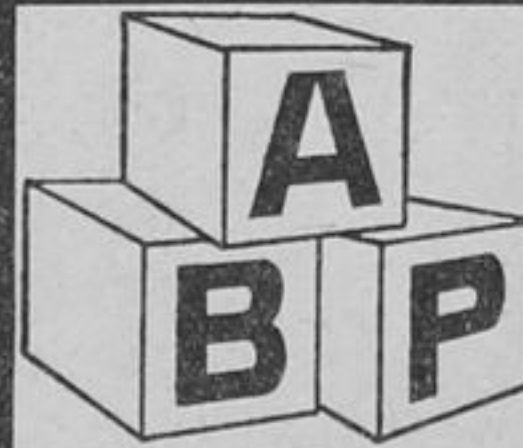
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