

e - articles



*edited by
Dale Harvey*

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Vital Vegetables



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There is something very special, almost magical, about growing your own vegetables. Breaking the ground, planting the seeds, watching them sprout, tending them carefully as they grow and celebrating the harvest is a timeless ritual of gardeners worldwide.



It links us to our pioneer heritage when vegetable gardening was essential to survival.

Devoted vegetable gardeners often glow with a sense of pride, achievement and confidence that comes from being self-sufficient.



Many life-long friendships have been made through sharing seeds, plants, ideas and experiences over the backyard fence. Vegetable gardening is a great way to spend quality time with family and friends.

Many children have their first contact with nature in the backyard vegetable patch learning lessons that will uplift their character, values and personality for the rest of their lives. Vegetable gardening rewards us with healthy exercise, fresh air and sunshine, pleasantly relieves stress and tension, and provides an abundance of fresh food of the highest quality.



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The ideal vegetable garden slopes gently into the warm northeast sun. The more sunshine the better as this produces stronger plants with higher mineral content. Most vegetables will not grow well in much shade.

Shelter from strong, cold winds is essential. In exposed sites attempt to create windbreaks with trellis, wind-cloth, arbors, walls, fencing, hedges, trees or shrubs. Be sure to keep shrubs and trees at least 2m away from the garden boundary otherwise invading roots may rob the soil of minerals and water.

The traditional vegetable garden is



usually a rectangular or square plot divided into narrow rows of any length. Keep rows about 1.5 m across or less for easy weeding and maintenance.

Larger blocks of 2m.x 2m. or more are set aside for sprawling vines which are raised on low mounds or "hills" placed in the centre of each block.



In small gardens vines can be trained on trellis to save space. Raised beds reduce back-breaking bending, improves drainage and overcomes clay or poor soils.

Vegetables can also be grown in patches within the annual, perennial or shrub border. Organic gardeners often plant vegetables prone to insect damage i.e. broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, etc. next to plots of aromatic herbs like matricaria or marigold.

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