

Garden

Plan now for summer's crops

by STEVE HUNTER
of The Outlook staff

To grow or not to grow a vegetable garden may be the question and some East County experts have the answers to why a garden is worth the time and effort.

"Growing a garden is a lot of fun," said Judy Berg of Drakes 7-Dees Nursery.

"Most everything grows well in this area," said Lindy Pero of Original Landscapes and Garden Center.

In order to be a successful gardener, however, preparation is needed.

"Planning is real important," said Berg. "You need to pick a spot with as much sun as possible — with south exposure."

Berg said a small garden, about 10 by 10 feet, can handle tomatoes, lettuce, beets and other small crops.

But a large garden, with about 200 square feet, is needed to handle such large crops as corn and potatoes.

Once the garden site has been picked, the soil must be prepared for the crops.

"The best thing to work in is organic matter," said Pero. "Sawdust, barkdust, peat moss and manure can all be used."

Berg said the clay soil in this area should have about two inches of organic material worked into it. She advises to test the soil before working it, because if it is too wet, it is hard to work with.

"Take a handful of the soil and squeeze it," said Berg. "If the soil



JUDY BERG
Planning is important

crumbles, it's okay to work. If it forms together like a snowball — it's too early."

Pero recommends designing the garden rows from east-to-west for maximum sun exposure. She also said to be sure to plant the taller crops, such as corn, in the back of the garden so it does not shade the other crops.

Some crops — called cold-weather crops — can be planted now, such as lettuce, peas, broccoli and cabbage. The warm-weather crops such as tomatoes, squashes, beans, corn, peppers and others should be planted in May.

"It depends on the kind of spring we have," said Berg about a planting date. "If we have a cold, wet spring — it's best to wait until the end of May."

"If tomatoes are put in too early," said Berg, "the cold can stunt their growth."

Tomatoes and some other crops

can be started inside now and moved outside when the weather warms. Tomatoes and other vegetable plants can be started from seed, which costs about 49 cents a pack or they can be bought already started for a slightly higher price.

Corn does take quite a bit of space and Berg believes to grow it successfully at least five rows are needed for pollination.

Berg said when planting seed it is important to fertilize the row, too, and after about six weeks fertilize it again. She said corn needs a lot of fertilizer, but tomatoes should only be fertilized once.

The seeds should be watered when planted and kept moist while under ground. It takes most of them about seven to 14 days to germinate.

Pero suggests to also use insecticide when planting seeds to kill the insects that are in with the seeds. She said liquid or powder slugbait can be put around the vegetable rows and is real effective and safe to use.

A couple of uncommon crops that Pero believes more persons might like to plant are asparagus and artichokes. Both grow back every year and look more like small shrubs than vegetables.

How often should a garden be watered?

Both experts agree that it depends on the rainfall, but about once a week should do it. Tomatoes, however, need more water than the other crops. It is best to water the garden in the early morning.

Pero said numerous books are available on how to garden and how to grow specific crops.

'Density planting' is new gardening trend

If your garden plot is a little smaller than you would prefer and you want increase the vegetable yield, try density planting this year.

Density planting is just what it sounds like, says Ray McNeilan of Gresham, an Oregon State University Extension home gardening agent. It's a matter of putting more plantings in a smaller area during the growing season.

Here are some density planting techniques.

Use closer spacing between rows and within the row. Close spacing calls for more fertilizer and water than normal spacing. It also means watching carefully to make sure the vegetables aren't too crowded, which could keep them from maturing.

Rather than plant radishes and lettuce in rows 2 1/2 feet apart, leave only one foot between rows. You may want to limit the row length to 5 or 6 feet to allow access for weeding, thinning and fertilizing and harvesting. Or, leave the rows at their traditional width, but instead of planting the seeds in single file, scatter them over a 3 or 4 inch strip within the row.

Use succession planting. Plant one crop several times by spacing the plantings a week or more apart. This will keep the vegetables from maturing at the same time and yield fresh vegetables for the table at a manageable rate. Sweet corn, beans, leaf lettuce and turnips are some crops suited to this type of planting.

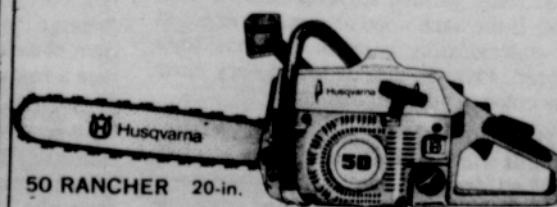
Another type of succession planting calls for replanting an area of harvested vegetables with a new vegetable. This works best with early and late crops. An early crop of peas could be followed by a late crop of cauliflower, broccoli or kale. Lettuce, onions and radishes could be followed later in the summer by crops of carrots, spinach, chard or cabbage.

Plant fast and slow growing crops in the same row. For instance, plant radishes between cucumbers, lettuce between hills of corn. Just be careful that the fast-growing vegetable doesn't grow so tall that it shades the slower-growing one.

Use stakes or trellises to get bushy, sprawling plants such as tomatoes and cucumbers up in the air.

Choose vegetable varieties that take up less space, such as bush-type squash. If they are available, dwarf and miniature varieties — for example, miniature watermelon — can be used.

NOW . . . HUSQVARNA SAWS IN SANDY



50 RANCHER 20-in.

WITH

Free Offer
Get our
unique safety
helmet when you buy
any new Husqvarna.

ONLY
\$334⁹⁵



Fergusons Power Equip.
Pioneer Square
Sandy, Or 668-4727



"We sell the best
and fix the rest."



Tuesday Special!

Crispy Deep-fried

BURRITOS

(Meat or Bean)



Only **75¢** ea.

Good at . . .

Sandy • Gresham
Estacada • Parkrose



TacoTime®



Olaf M Oja
Lumber Co.
Sandy, Oregon

668-4022

Cedar Decking
Cedar Fencing
Cedar Siding
Alaska Yellow Cedar
Fir - Pine
Penofin, oil-finish
Aged Barkdust