

Starting a Backyard Vegetable Garden

10 Basic Steps

- Ken Benson L. A. M Ed.

1 Search online or visit Ace Hardware, Menards or Home Deopt for seeds and supplies.

2 Select items remembering everything you like may not fit your garden area.

- Squash, pumpkins, cucumbers and vine crops need space. An alternative is to train them on a trellis
- Pole beans are grown on a pole and need space
- Note: there are cool and warm season crops

3 Select an area that has a full sweep of the sun. If you have a shady yard, select the area with the most sunlight.

4 Determine if you will use raised beds, containers or just plant in ground

- Raised beds are not necessary, unless your garden area has poor drainage.

5 Some cool season crops that can be sown in early April are:

- Peas, lettuce, potatoes, beets, swiss chard, cilantro and carrots

6 Transplants in many varieties are available from Garden Nurseries like Pesches in Des Plaines and local grocery stores like Caputo's Market in Elmwood Park

- Transplants are best for beginners and can be purchased and planted around May 15, the typical frost free date for northern Illinois.

7 Many seeds can be planted directly in the garden around the end of the first week in May

- Examples: cucumber, squash, pumpkin, beans, lettuce, spinach, radishes, carrots, onions and melons of many kinds. If your space is limited consider growing on a trellis.

8 Most tomatoes and pepper plants can go in the ground around May 15 with a starter fertilizer dissolved in water and used to water the new plants

9 Water, Feed and Weed

- Be aware of watering requirements for each plant. Rain frequency will reduce or increase watering. Consider a rain barrel

10 Harvest and Enjoy!

- If you have questions, feel free to email the Park District of Franklin Park at contact_us@fpparks.org. There are unlimited Garden resources and techniques online that can help with every aspect of home gardening. Have fun and give children the chance to help in the garden!

