



*Redmond's*

GARDEN, LANDSCAPE & GIFT CENTER

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# Vegetables

**Select a site:** Ensure that your plot has deep, well-drained, fertile soil; level ground that allows water and fertilizer to seep into the soil; and at least 6 hours of sun per day during the growing season.

**Soil content:** Test your soil's pH level with a home testing kit or through your local extension office. The results will determine the amount of fertilizer, lime, organic matter and any other soil amendments you might need to nurture healthy plants.

**Preparing your soil:** Dig the soil to a depth of 8-12 inches. Break up soil clods, remove stones and weeds. Add the necessary amendments and turn the soil. For successful seed sowing, remove any pebbles or twigs and break up any remaining clods of dirt and rake the soil smooth.

**Develop a garden plan:** Calculate how many plants you will need. Often times, we grow far more plants than necessary. Also, the size of your garden should correspond to the amount of time you have to spend in it. Smaller plots or container gardens can yield substantial harvests if planned well. Raised beds allow you to control soil quality, providing easy access for weeding.

**Sowing Seeds:** Direct-sowing seeds into the ground is the simplest way to start seedlings once the threat of frost has passed.

## Basic Maintenance

**Water:** Water the bed with a fine spray of water until the top few inches of soil are thoroughly moistened. Keep beds well-watered: allowing the soil to dry out can cause vegetables to be less flavorful.

**Mulch:** Use mulch to control weeds, retain soil moisture, and protect from sun and heat.

**Thin Seedlings:** Thin overcrowded seedlings when they are small, before extensive root systems develop, so the remaining ones have adequate space to grow.

**Reseed:** Replace chill-tolerant spring crops with heat-tolerant ones in summer. Cool-loving plants can also be planted in fall to further extend your harvest.

**Stake:** Use wooden stakes or bamboo poles to support lanky plants, such as tomatoes, pole beans, cucumbers, melons and squash; supporting the branches will allow sunlight to reach the fruit. Training plants onto vertical supports is also an efficient and attractive use of space.

**Harvest:** Harvest your vegetables as soon as they mature. Gather produce in the morning, and use the same day for optimal flavor.

**Enrich Soil:** Change your planting scheme each season, and add amendments as needed. One workable rule of thumb is to dig 4 inches of organic material into the top 8-12 inches of soil per year.