



EAST VILLAGE COMMUNITY GARDEN

What can I grow in my garden plot?

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR LIMITED SPACE

The Crossroads Community Garden provides the opportunity for community members to come together to grow vegetables, flowers and herbs, meet new people and enjoy the outdoors throughout the growing season.

Information and a few growing tips are listed below.

Prepared by Susan, Garden Coordinator
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CROP ROTATION

How do we practice crop rotation in the community garden? Is it even necessary?

Crop rotation has been around for centuries. Simply it is changing what is planted in a particular area each year. Planting the same crop year after year in the same location causes disease pathogens to build up and become a real problem. Rotating crops helps break this disease cycle. Also, since different crops use varying amounts of plant nutrients, crop rotation is a wise use of the nutrition in your soil. **Don't plant crops from the same plant family in the same place every year.**



SEED EXCHANGE

Maybe you bought too many flower and vegetable seeds. Or, perhaps you're lusting for different types of seeds to grow this year. No problem. Why not share the bounty by swapping those seeds with other gardeners?



WHAT TO PLANT IN A COMMUNITY GARDEN

High Maintenance vs. Low Maintenance Vegetables. The number one thing to know is that some vegetable plants require much more constant attention than others.

For example, a kale seedling gets planted in early spring and basically hangs out in the garden producing food until winter when it gets killed by heavy frosts if you live in a cold climate. During those months in between, there's not much you need to do except keep the plants watered and harvest kale leaves whenever you want to take some home for dinner. That's what I call a low maintenance vegetable.

In contrast, bush green beans are more high maintenance. Once they starting producing beans, you need to pick those babies every other day because they grow quickly. f you don't, you'll end up with a harvest basket full of beans that are too big and too tough to be delicious. They need constant attention during the weeks they're being harvested.

So, why do these two categories matter?

Most people who tend community gardens aren't able to visit their plots every day. This makes growing vegetables that need daily attention problematic and often leads to frustration. If this is true for you, then you should choose vegetables that can hang out in the garden on their own as much as possible – the low maintenance vegetables.

ARUGULA

Also known as “rocket” or “roquette,” **arugula** is a fast-growing, cool-season salad green that adds a tangy, mustard-like flavor to salads.

Growing

Keep the soil moist and weed frequently. Arugula is undemanding the main work is keeping on top of its speedy growth.

Bolting

The first step to preventing bolting is to understand what causes it. Bolting, or going to seed, is a natural part of the plant's life cycle. Some plants have longer life cycles than others. Arugula, lettuce, cilantro and dill all have relatively short life cycles, so they will try to produce seed within 8 to 10 weeks of being planted. It is an inevitable part of the plant life cycle but can be postponed with good management. It can also be caused by shock by too much or too little water.

Companion planting

You may have success planting arugula between rows of companion vegetables such as bush beans, beets, carrots, cucumber, lettuce, onion, and spinach.

BASIL

is a warm-weather, fragrant herb that tastes great in many dishes—including homemade pesto! Plant seeds or transplants after all danger of frost has passed and soil is warm, and it will yield an abundant harvest within weeks. Keep harvesting the leaves to keep the plant going strong.

Don't rush basil. Without heat, the plant won't grow well. Basil works great in containers or raised beds, as these allow for better drainage.

Companion Planting: Tomatoes make great neighbours for basil plants in the garden.



BEANS

If you are looking for an easy to grow vegetable that ranks right up there in popularity with tomatoes, try **growing green beans**. Find out which variety is a good choice in your vegetable gardening project this summer – bush beans vs pole beans. Both types of beans are from the wax bean family and are easy to grow. The main difference between bush beans and pole beans is the support that they need.

Beans are a good crop to plant when gardening with kids. The seeds are quite large and the kids will be able to plant them easily.

Bush Beans - They will grow to about 2 feet tall and growing bush beans is suited to smaller garden beds, like raised beds where the beans small footprint doesn't take up too space. Generally, a support is not needed for bush beans, although they enjoy being planted in two rows near to each other to give them some light support, especially when they bear fruit.

Harvesting Beans - The trick to getting a great bean harvest is to pick the beans regularly. If you wait to pick, the bean pods will grow too large and the beans will be tough and stringy and the overall harvest smaller.

Did You Know: There is a reason that yellow beans are more expensive than green beans. The plants grow more slowly and produce less beans.

	<p>What to Avoid Planting Around Beans Certain plants can actually inhibit the growth of beans when they are planted nearby.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beets (depends on the bean): Pole beans and bush beans share all of the same companion plant recommendations with the exception of beets. Pole beans do not thrive when beets are planted nearby; the plants stunt each other's growth. But bush beans are not affected by beets.• Onion family: Avoid planting beans near all members of the <i>allium</i> family. Members of this family inhibit the growth of bean plants because they exude a substance that kills beneficial bacterial on bean roots and prevent the bean plants from adding nitrogen to the soil.• Sunflowers: Like corn, sunflowers seem like they would be an ideal "pole" for pole beans to climb and grow upright. However, sunflowers give off a chemical compound that inhibits the growth of beans, making them incompatible plants.
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BEETS

are a direct sow vegetable. With their earthy sweetness and rich color, beets are delicious pickled, roasted, steamed or baked. Tasty greens are a special treat, and are very easy to grow. Beets are incredibly healthy for you. Both the roots and the leaves are an excellent source of antioxidants, minerals, and vitamin C.

Sow seeds directly in the garden. Sow 1 inch deep, and 3 inches apart. Space rows 12 inches apart. Beet seeds are actually compound seeds; several individual beet seeds are contained in one seed. When the plants are about three inches tall, thin the beets to one per every 3 inches.

Tip: When working with red beets, wear gloves, or use lemon juice to remove red stain from hands.
Varieties that grow well in Calgary - **Detroit Dark Red, Burpee's Golden, Early Wonder**



Dolce Di Chioggia is a beautiful scarlet garden beet. This Italian specialty is a wonderful variety with attractive coloring that features interior rings of reddish-pink and white. The tops can be used as fresh greens in salads, or steamed for a cooked vegetable.



Detroit Dark Red is the perfect all-purpose beet variety. This medium-early variety produces round, dark red roots. These beets are very enjoyable, growing tender and fine-grained throughout. Tops are great for salads too!

Preparation Ideas: The skin on beets is easiest removed after beets are roasted, steamed or boiled. Once cool enough to handle, the skin is easily removed with a paper towel.

CARROTS

Choosing and preparing a planting site

- Carrots need a location that receives full sunlight, though they can tolerate partial shade, too.
- Soil must be loose, and airy so that carrot roots can easily push down through the soil.

How to plant carrots

- Sow seeds directly in the garden rather than transplanting. Carrots do not like to have their roots disturbed.
- Carrots seeds are small and finicky to plant. Garden Coordinator recommends “seed tape”.
- Carrots are sometimes slow to germinate. They may take 2 to 3 weeks to show any sign of life, so don’t panic if your carrots don’t appear right away.

Seed tape

- **Seed Tapes require consistent moisture to ensure best germination.**
- **Planting Instructions:** Prepare the soil for planting. Make shallow rows 13 mm (1/2") deep and 30 cm (12") apart. Tear strips apart and unroll into rows. Water the Seed tape thoroughly, then cover with soil and water thoroughly again.
- Carrot Red Cored Chantenay Seed Tape - especially good variety for heavy soil.

How do you store fresh carrots?

- To store freshly harvested carrots, twist or cut off all but ½ inch of the tops, scrub off any dirt under cold running water, and air-dry. Seal in airtight plastic bags, refrigerate. If you simply put fresh carrots in the refrigerator, they'll go limp in a few hours.
- **Tip:** bring a scrub brush and bucket out to the garden to rinse your carrots, to avoid clogging your kitchen sink with dirt.

Companion Planting

Companion planting is the practice of growing plants together or grouping them together side by side, like 'companions' or 'buddies', for the mutual benefit of each plant.

- **Onion** – deter carrot flies by masking the odor of carrots – making carrot flies think there is nothing for them.
- **Rosemary** – mask the odor of carrots – deterring carrot flies.
- **Chives** – improve the flavour of carrots and mask their odor to deter carrot flies.
- **Lettuce** - can help to loosen the soil and makes a good companion when you sow carrots in cooler weather.

COSMOS

are annual flowers with colorful daisy-like flowers that sit atop long slender stems. Blooming throughout the summer months, they attract birds, bees, and butterflies to your garden. Growing easily from seeds, cosmos even survive in poor soil conditions!

Good to know: Some self-sowing annuals spread so many seeds that they become weedy and out of control. Cosmos is a moderate re-seeder, which means that it drops plenty of seeds to bring it back year after year without becoming an uncontrollable nuisance. For cosmos to reseed itself, you have to leave the faded flowers in place long enough for seeds to form.

Important: Cosmos can grow up to 6 feet tall. Plant a few seeds and share extra seeds with others.

KALE

is a cabbage relative that is classified as *Brassica oleracea var. acephala*. It is essentially a form of cabbage that doesn't have the tightly formed head associated with most cabbages. A powerhouse of nutrients, kale is usually grouped in the cooking greens category with collards, mustard, and Swiss chard. Kale plants can be quite ornamental, with textured and curly leaves that come in shades of green, purple, and more. The plants are usually considered a cool-season vegetable and can handle some frost once they're mature.

It can be grown as a [cut-and-come-again vegetable](#), meaning you harvest what you need while the plant continues to grow. So, you might only require a few kale plants, depending on how often you include it in your diet.

- Kale is a cold weather plant and does well here in Calgary because of our cool spring weather.
- Plant seeds once the soil can be worked. Sow ½ inch deep and approximately 3 inches apart. Space rows 10 inches apart. Thin plants to 12 inches apart when they are 4 to 5 inches tall.
- Varieties that grow well in Calgary - Black Tuscan, Dwarf Curled Scotch

LETTUCE

is cool-season crop that grows well in the spring.

How to plant lettuce

Lettuce does not compete well with weeds. Before you plant, ensure the ground is prepared. Rotating locations from year to year helps control most diseases. Closely spaced plants will help control weeds.

Seed tape

Grand Rapids is the best-known loose-leaf lettuce variety. This variety produces medium to large upright, light green leaves. The mild and flavorful leaves are frilled and crisp. Being an exceptionally fast grower. This cool season plant is slow to bolt. Romaine Lettuce develops elongated heads with long, ribbed leaves. The coarse outer leaves of this cool weather crop are a dark green, while the inner leaves are a lighter green. This Romaine variety is of splendid quality for Caesar salad.

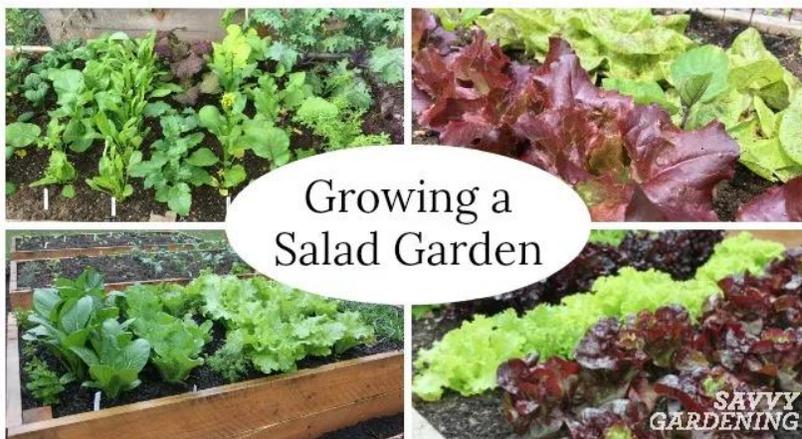
Seed tapes require consistent moisture to ensure best germination.

How to harvest lettuce

- Lettuce should be harvested when full size, but just before maturity. The leaves taste best when they're still young and tender.
- Before maturity, you can harvest leaf lettuce by simply removing outer leaves so that the center leaves can continue to grow.
- Mature lettuce gets bitter and woody and will go bad quickly, so check your garden everyday for ready-to-harvest leaves.
- It's best to harvest lettuce in the morning before leaves have been exposed to sun.
- When plants bolt, the flavor also declines as leaves become more bitter.

Companion Planting

Consider planting rows of chives or garlic between your lettuce to control aphids. They act as "barrier plants" for the lettuce.



LEGUMES – benefits of [Peas, Beans, Broad Beans, Snow Peas]

These plants have the ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen and store it in the soil in a form that is accessible to plants. It is particularly beneficial to allow these plants to break down into the soil once their productive life is over. This helps to add nitrogen rich organic matter to the bed.

PEAS

Nothing beats the taste of peas that are freshly picked.

Peas prefer cool weather. Plant as early in spring as the soil can be worked. Sow seeds 1 inch deep and 1-3 inches apart. Space rows 24 inches apart. Plant most varieties along a trellis or netting for support as they climb.

Crop rotation: It's best to rotate pea crops every year or two to avoid a buildup of soil-borne diseases. In between pea plantings, plant other vegetables to take advantage of the nitrogen-rich soil that peas leave behind (they are a nitrogen-fixing legume).

Varieties that grow well in Calgary - Sugar Snap, Little Green

When to Plant: A cool weather crop, peas do very well when planted early in the season once the soil can be worked. Consider planting both early and late-maturing varieties for an extended harvest period.

Planting & Growing Information: Sow seeds 2.5 cm (1") deep and 2.5 cm (1") apart. Row spacing 75 cm (30"). Seeds germinate in approximately 5-10 days.

Other Information: Pea plants need regular moisture from the time they are in blossom until the end of the season for higher yields and better quality. Peas will not be as sweet when grown in dry conditions. Best when used same day they are picked but can be stored in plastic bags in the refrigerator.

Companion Planting: Likes: Beans, Carrots, and Radish.

Wit and Wisdom: Legend has it that the phrase "green thumb" originated during the reign of King Edward I of England, who was fond of green peas and kept six serfs shelling them during the season. The serf who had the greenest thumb won a prize!



Container gardening (DIY Project):
Plant a few: Succulents, Hens and Chicks or Portulaca



How to make a bee watering station:
Fill the container with water so that only the tops of your marbles or

pebbles are exposed. This will provide a safe landing spot for the bees when they come to drink.

Place the container in a cool, shady spot or near your flower beds with the most bee activity.

RADISHES

are one of the easiest, quickest growing crops you can plant in your garden.

Sow seeds ½ inch deep and 1 to 2 inches apart. If you plant at this spacing, you won't have to worry about thinning. Space rows 8 inches apart. Radishes need more water than most other root crops. If they don't get enough water, the roots turn woody and tough. Make sure that they get at least one inch of water per week.

Radishes that have been left in the garden too long will be fit only for the compost pile. The best way to determine when to harvest is to simply push back a little soil to see if a bulb has grown and then pick and taste a few. Radishes are not nutritional giants. They are a fair source of vitamin C and iron, but aren't eaten in sufficient quantity to be significant sources of either. It's their crisp taste, that extra zing they add to salad and a variety of other dishes that make radishes welcome in the kitchen.

Varieties that grow well in Calgary - Cherry Belle (round), French Breakfast (tubular)



French Breakfast Radish is a true gourmet treat. The large, oblong radish has an attractive scarlet color and white tip. This cool weather crop is crisp and juicy with a mild sweet flavor you won't be able to resist.

Note: Seed tapes require consistent moisture to ensure best germination.



Cherry Belle Radish is a very popular and quick growing variety. Its round, bright red fruit resembles a cherry at 2 cm (3 /4") in size. While red on the outside, the inside has crisp, white, solid flesh. This cool weather crop even holds its mild flavor in the refrigerator.

SPINACH

is a cold weather plant and does well here in Calgary because of our cool spring weather. Spinach will bolt in warm weather so it is best planted as soon as the soil can be worked. Sow spinach seeds 4 to 6 inches apart, ½ inch deep. Space rows 14 inches apart.

Varieties that grow well in Calgary - Bloomsdale Longstanding, Tyees

Other Information:

- The trick to growing spinach is to grow it fast and harvest it fast, and use the right varieties in the right season. Spinach bolts as the days get long and when the weather gets hot.
- If limited on space or want to try something new, mix different greens together to make your own salad bed.
- Spinach does very well in a container.
- Do not allow plants to dry out – be sure to water during dry spells.
- Rapid changes in temperature and moisture levels can cause spinach to become bitter.

STRAWBERRIES

Knowing how to grow *strawberries can be challenging* in our part of the world – sometimes they just don't bear any fruit, other times they just keep napping after their winter sleep and don't come back at all. Let's take a look at the best way to grow strawberries.

Wintering your strawberries correctly is very important especially in Calgary's very cold climate. In the fall after the frost starts to hit your plantings you can start to cover them up for the winter. You can choose a variety of covers for plant protection including mulch. Make sure you create a good thick protective layer over top your strawberries of at least 8-12". This protective covering will ensure you have much less winter kill and a much greater yield of fruit come summer time.

Tips:

- Avoid planting near tomatoes, pepper, potatoes – they tend to share common diseases.
- If you plant strawberries as a ground cover (they will require regular weeding) or plant in rows 3-4' apart.
- Remove flowers for 2-3 weeks after planting so the strawberry plant can establish roots and leaves without the extra strain of growing fruit.
- Depending on weather – water early in the day so that leaves can dry off during the day
- Keep the runners under control or cut them off with clean scissors
- Crop rotation – strawberries produce well for 3 to 4 years, and then they need to be rotated out

SWISS CHARD

In addition to being an excellent source of vitamins A and C and several minerals, chard is also rich in vitamin K, making it a valuable food for maintaining strong bones.

Sow seeds ½ inch deep and 2 inches apart directly in the garden when the soil has warmed up. Thin seedlings so they are 4 to 5 inches apart, or 8 to 10 inches apart if you plan to only harvest the outer leaves. Plant rows 12 inches apart.

Other Information:

- Water regularly for optimum growth which also helps reduce the likelihood of plants bolting (going to seed).
- Pick young or mature leaves just above the soil line so that plants can grow back for multiple harvests.
- Suggestion – plant half a row of Swiss chard so that you can enjoy before your crop bolts or goes to waste. Share extra seeds with other gardeners.

Harvesting & Storage

Swiss Chard does not store well for a long period of time and should be eaten the same day of picking or stored inside plastic bags in the refrigerator and used in 3-4 days.

Varieties that grow well in Calgary - Bright Lights (coloured stems), Fordhook Giant (white stems)

TOMATOES

Important: due to Calgary's short growing season tomatoes are best planted as transplants!

Bush tomatoes

Bush tomatoes are determinate, that is, they grow to a specific size, produce fruit and then die. With their shrub-like growth habit they do not usually need staking. Some bush tomatoes are also known as early tomatoes. Along with a relatively short time to maturation, these tomatoes will blossom and fruit with low night time temperatures, a fixture at the tail end of most Calgary summers.

Vine tomatoes

Vine tomatoes are considered indeterminate. That is, they continue growing for an indeterminate length of time. This means they will grow and produce fruit until the frost kills them. Vine tomatoes need to be planted in tomato cages or staked for support. Fruit from unsupported plants may rot and discolour on the round. Vines should be tied to tomato cages or stakes with stake tape as they grow.

Companion planting: Tomatoes and Basil grow well together.

Here is a link to compare tomato varieties for our Calgary climate.

<http://www.buyagreenhouse.com/gardening-information/guide-to-tomato-varieties>

ZUCCHINI

is a great producer and grows very quickly.

Sow the seeds directly into the soil after the last frost date. Sow seeds 1 inch deep. Sow 3 seeds in each spot you want a plant to grow and thin to the strongest one. Space zucchinis 18 to 24 inches apart in rows 36 to 48 inches apart. Zucchini requires full sun and needs to be watered regularly once the plant is established.

Varieties that grow well in Calgary - Black Beauty, Elegance

Zucchini is infamous for producing an overabundance of fruit. If you want to control the fruit production, snip off about half of the flowers as they open. If you can't eat it all, don't just leave it hanging on the vine as this will send a signal to the plant to stop producing.

Powdery mildew can be an issue on the leaves later on in the season. Keeping plants well-watered and leaving plenty of space between them for good airflow should slow the spread of this disease. If your zucchini does get powdery mildew, don't worry too much, as plants will usually cope.



WHICH BULBS GROW WELL IN ALBERTA [FALL BULB PLANTING]

Tulips, Crocus, Alliums, Fritillaria, Scilla, and Snowdrops are the best bulbs for our climate.



Alliums will tolerate poor, dry soil, and they can be left undisturbed for years and years and will multiply.

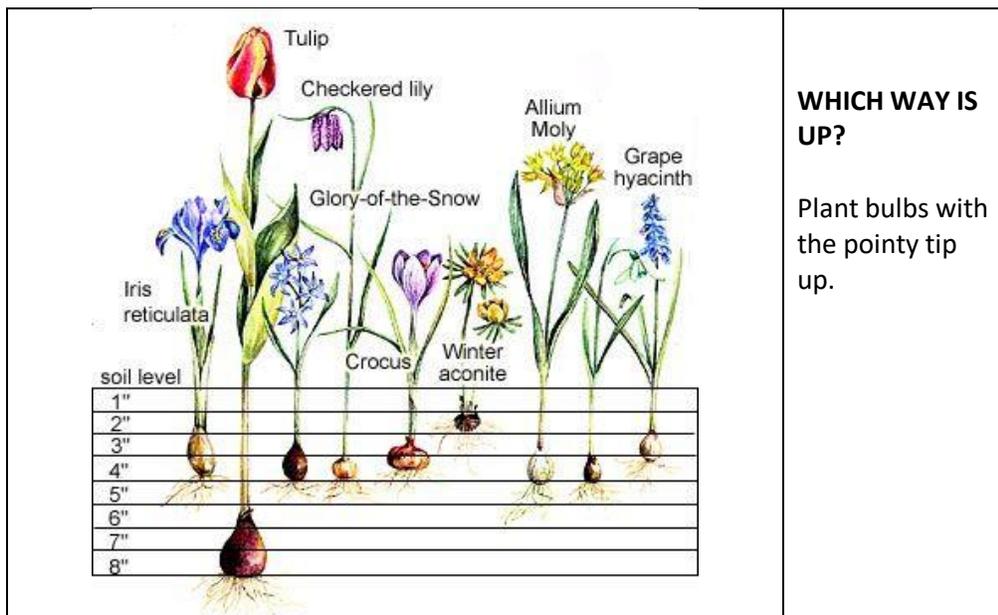
A collection of interesting pompom shaped blooms in an array of colours and sizes. Alliums are known not just as a relative of the onion, but also as a class of ornamentals that make ideal cut flowers. Alliums can be planted in any location of a garden or flower bed. Their long-lasting blooms make a bold statement and are always a great topic of conversation for passersby.

TULIPS

Interesting fact: Canada and the Netherlands have a very special relationship ever since World War II. **It was the** Canadian forces who led the liberation of the Netherlands, and we even provided sanctuary for the Dutch Royal Family when their country was under Nazi occupation. During their time here, Princess Juliana gave birth to her daughter, Princess Margriet in an Ottawa hospital. As a favor, the hospital was temporarily declared as an international territory, which means the Princess would inherit Dutch citizenship from her mother. To show their gratitude, the Dutch royal family sent 100,000 tulip bulbs to Canada. The year after that, they sent another 20,000 and promised to send another 10,000 every year.

Planting tip: Plant tulips from early- to late-September. They need time to take in nutrients, sprout roots and establish themselves before freeze-up. Give them longer to establish themselves and you'll be treated to a rewarding spring show.

Choosing bulbs: It's official: size does matter (with tulips, that is). Bigger bulbs equal taller, wider, downright better blooms. Don't be afraid to rifle through the packages at the garden centre looking for the beefiest bulb. If you squeeze it and your finger sinks into, or through, the bulb, keep walking.



WHICH WAY IS UP?

Plant bulbs with the pointy tip up.