

Summer Vegetable Gardening

With Ann Naffziger

Plants that do well in Alameda County in the summer:

Vegetables

Basil	Peppers – sweet or hot
Beans (fresh or dried)	Pumpkins
Corn – a bit trickier depending on heat	Summer squash (ex: yellow, zucchini)
Cucumbers	Tomatoes
Eggplants	Winter squash (ex: acorn, butternut)

Fruits

Blueberries	some citrus* (oranges, mandarins,
Blackberries	tangerines, lemons, limes)
Raspberries	plums
Apples	strawberries
apricots,*	figs.

*Can be trickier depending on the microclimate and the variety of the fruit.

Space considerations

- Sprawling plants: winter squash, pumpkins, some summer squashes
- Need vertical space: corn, tomatoes, pole beans
- Need some vertical and horizontal space – tomatoes, peppers, bush beans, eggplant, basil, corn
- Containers – almost all of the above can be grown in containers except sprawlers

Supports/trellises

- Pole beans and climbing cucumbers will need something to climb that the tendrils can wrap around.
- Tomatoes – “Determinate” varieties are smaller/shorter. “Indeterminate” can easily grow 6-8 feet

Preparing and amending the soil

- Compost! Compost! Compost! When in doubt, add compost.
- Other nutrient rich additions: worm castings, rabbit droppings, chicken manure (must be aged first)
- Organic material – periodically add grass clippings, dried leaves, and other plant materials back into the ground to replenish it for future years.
- Weed and mulch around plants.

Seeds versus seedlings

1. Easy-to-start seeds that can be planted directly outside in late April/May:
 - Beans
 - Corn
 - Cucumbers
 - All squashes

2. Better planted as seedlings in late April/May
 - Basil
 - Eggplant
 - Peppers
 - Tomatoes

Harvesting

Pick before crops they are overgrown, then eat them, share them, preserve them!

Resources:

Golden Gate Gardening by Pam Peirce (3rd edition, 2010)

Alameda County Master Gardeners website at <http://acmg.ucdavis.edu/>

More about growing food: http://acmg.ucdavis.edu/Growing_Your_Own_Food/

How to build a compost bin: <http://www.stopwaste.org/home/index.asp?page=445>