

Laying out a Vegetable Garden

A. Site Selection

1. Southern exposure – minimum of 6 hours of sunlight daily
2. As flat as possible – avoid steep slopes
3. Close to the house for ease of care, harvest, and protection
4. Soil
 - a. sandy loam is best, especially for root crops
 - b. clay is fine for many crops, as long as it is well drained

B. Site Preparation

1. Remove sod and weeds
 - a. Manual removal
 - b. Solarization – till up the soil and water. Cover with a sheet of clear plastic, anchor at the edges with stones and wait 4-6 weeks
 - c. Herbicides – use as a last resort, can kill nearby plants, trees, etc.

C. Crop Selection

1. Grow what you and your family like to eat
2. Experiment with new vegetables, children may be willing to try new vegetables they have helped grow
3. In the Ogemaw County area, select early maturing varieties so they will ripen before the first fall frost
4. Decide which vegetables you will direct sow and which you will use as transplants

D. Garden Plan

1. Square the four corners of the garden if you desire straight rows
2. Make a list of the crops you intend to plant. List their space requirements (information found on seed packets or plant tags)
3. Draw up a plan indicating where each crop is to be planted. See “Alternatives to traditional rows” to determine how you want your rows spaced
4. Running rows east to west will expose the plants to sunlight for a longer period each day
5. Place tallest crops; such as corn or bean teepees, on the north side of the garden to minimize shading of shorter crops

