



# VEGETABLES

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## 1. Shape of the vegetable bed

- The shape of the vegetable bed must not allow water run off.
- A square or rectangular shape vegetable bed is far better than a long, narrow vegetable bed.
- The edges of the vegetable bed should be built up in order to prevent water run off.

- The flat vegetable bed allows vegetables to be planted more closely.
- Keep the pathways as narrow as possible, to reduce loss of space and water.

## 2. Irrigation

- If you water by hand, have the spray nozzle set at the appropriate width.
- An irrigation system needs to have the correct shaped sprayer for the vegetable bed. Drip irrigation may be used should the vegetable beds be large.

### 3. Water Wise practices

- Combine water retaining granules for example Stockosorb and Terrasorb with the soil. For Stockosorb mix 3g of dry mix into 1m<sup>2</sup> of soil to a depth of 10cm. For Terrasorb mix 50g with 10 litres of water, then mix this gel into 5m<sup>2</sup> of soil to a depth of 10cm.
- Prepare a drill no more than 5 times the depth of the seed and then water. Once this is complete sow the seeds and cover with a layer of grass clippings or other suitable mulch.
- In closely spaced parallel rows, sow carrots, beet, radish, turnips etc. to reduce the area required. When the plants are young and ready to harvest remove alternate plants to make space for the remaining plants to mature.
- Containers can be used to grow vegetables requiring large amounts of water for example cucumbers and tomatoes.
- Containers can also be used to create various combinations of vegetables and plants allowing for an interesting and well presented display/focal point.
- Vegetables germinate at different rates and it is therefore important to consider sowing slow germinating plants such as egg plants, leeks, celery and tomatoes together and fast germinating plants such as radish, lettuce, cabbage and broccoli together.

### 4. Mulching

- Various mulching materials can be used, ranging from grass through to plastic sheeting.
- Always ensure that beds are well mulched.
- Mulching under plants such as strawberries, marrows and pumpkins will keep the produce off the ground preventing rotting and reduce soil splash.
- For more information refer to MULCH (3).

### 5. The edible garden

- This is a new and ideal concept especially for small and townhouse gardens.
- Use your sunny high water use zones to grow both vegetables and flowers.
- Many vegetables are attractive and blend well in the garden to achieve an overall aesthetic appearance examples are lettuce (many decorative varieties), chives, kale, parsley, radish, cauliflower and spinach.
- Use as a border or in a mixed grouping in your high water use zone.
- Mixing vegetables and annuals in the garden will allow for harvesting of young lettuce and radish at an early stage to allow the annuals to grow to full maturity.

### 6. Herbs

- Most herbs are able to tolerate much drier conditions than vegetables.
- Herbs such as yarrow, wormwood, lavender, rosemary, sage and thyme will use less water and should therefore be placed in a medium to low water use zone.
- Basil and parsley require more water and need to be planted in accordance.
- Companion planting with herbs such as nasturtium, marigold, garlic chives and chives will repel insects and assist healthier vegetables.