

Grow Your Own Backyard Veggies

Everyone else in the country is done harvesting most of their garden veggies, and we are just at the beginning of our growing season.

Start a vegetable garden to experience the fresh air, sunshine, mental therapy, knowledge, and of course, supply family and friends with fresh food that's packed with vitamins. Choose a location near the house where the soil is well drained and receives 6 hours of sunshine and close to the water spigot. Draw up a plan of the vegetables you want to plant and always choose varieties recommended for South Florida.

South Florida Vegetable varieties recommended by the University of Florida include 'Cherokee Wax'- snap bush bean; 'Red Kidney'- shell bush bean; 'Ashley'-cucumber; 'Galaxy'- pickler cucumber; 'Big Bertha'- sweet pepper; 'Hungarian Wax' - hot pepper; 'Floradel' or 'Solar Set' or 'Better Boy'- large tomatoes and 'Sweet 100'- small tomatoes.

Plant on whatever soil type you have, but it is usually worthwhile to improve your garden soil with organic matter as compost or composted manures. Spade the plot at least three weeks before planting and smooth the soil at planting time. Fertilize with organic or inorganic fertilizers per the manufactures recommendations to keep plants growing vigorously. Mulch the plants with pine straw to help keep plants moist, weed and disease free. Scout the garden twice per week for pest and disease problems. Learn to recognize beneficial insects as praying mantis and lady beetles these good insects prey on pest insects. Don't forget to weed in and around the vegetable garden. Record notes on pest problems and performance of the different vegetables, this information will be invaluable for your next vegetable installation.

Stop by the Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Service 531 North Military Trail in West Palm Beach to pick up the publication SP 103 Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide Monday through Friday 9am-4pm, Vegetables suited to Florida gardens, leading varieties, seed or transplants needed, planting distances and depths, best time for planting by areas, hardiness, days to harvest and expected yields are shown in this publication.



Figure 1

Prepared Vegetable Garden Area
in Mounts Botanical Garden