

Growing Your Own Food

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What do I need?

- Good soil
- Water
- Nutrients
- Sunshine



Importance of soil

Living, healthy soil is critical

Good soil is the foundation
of a good garden

Making your own compost
is one of the best ways of
improving your soil

The best food is grown in
the best soil.

Soil testing?



What to grow in your vegetable garden?

Vegetables

- Leafy greens
- Tomatoes
- Capsicum
- Chilli
- Spring onions



What to grow in your vegetable garden?

Herbs

- Mint
- Sage
- Oregano
- Basil
- Coriander
- Chives
- Parsley



What to grow in your vegetable garden?

Fruits

- Strawberries
- Blueberries
- Citrus
- Apples
- Stone fruit



When to Grow

- Some vegetables grow better at certain times of the year (e.g. tomatoes)
- You might want to eat certain vegetables at different times of the year (e.g. more salads in the summer)
- Depends on how long the crop takes to mature (some are quick, some are slow)
- Maintain a diary or keep a journal



Soil preparation

- Remove weeds, sticks and stones
- Dig over the top layer
- Test the soil pH and adjust if necessary
- Add compost and fertiliser (my mix)
- Cover with mulch to prevent drying out and suppress weeds



How should I start my fruit and vegetables?

- Seeds

- Carrot, beetroot, peas, beans, sweet corn, cucumber, zucchini

- Seedlings

- Tomato, capsicum, celery, strawberry, leeks, broccoli, cauliflower

- Tubers/rhizomes/corms/crowns etc

- Potatoes, garlic, ginger, asparagus, rhubarb

- Use plant labels

Plant seeds or seedlings

- Seeds are cheaper
- Much greater range of seeds are available
- Nurseries have a large range of seeds or buy online
- You can plant successive crops for a longer harvest
- Seedlings are quicker to harvest
- Seeds can be hard to germinate
- Seedlings give immediate visual impact



Where to locate your vegetable garden?

- Full sun is best, in most cases
- Where is the sun?
- Level spot
- Rainwater flow
- No too close to trees
- Limit exposure to wind
- Close to water supply



Where to grow

Raised beds (not too wide)

Made of timber, masonry, steel, plastic or straw bales

Kit form or make your own



Raised beds can be on legs

VegTrug



Raised beds can be on legs

Vegepod



... or you can make your own

DIY from pallets



Where to grow

Hanging baskets

Window boxes



Where to grow

Wicking beds



Where to grow

- IBC Tanks
- Cut in half
- Use food grade tanks



Where to grow

Herb spiral



Where to grow

- Vertical gardening - green wall systems
- Commercial products
- Make your own



Where to grow

Vertical garden at Annangrove



Where to grow - containers

Plastic pots



Halved wine barrels



Grow bags



Ceramic pots



Terracotta pots

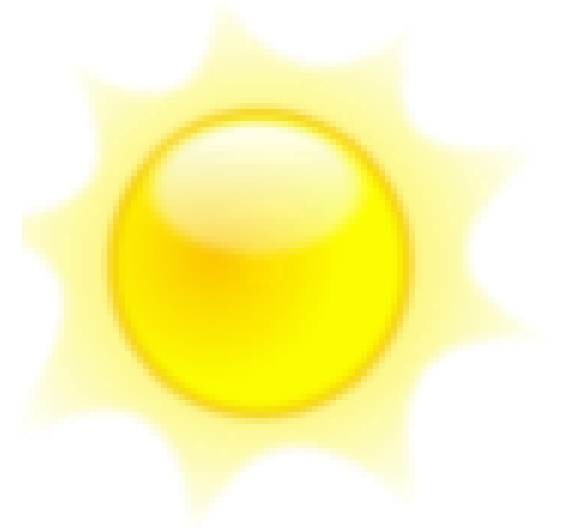


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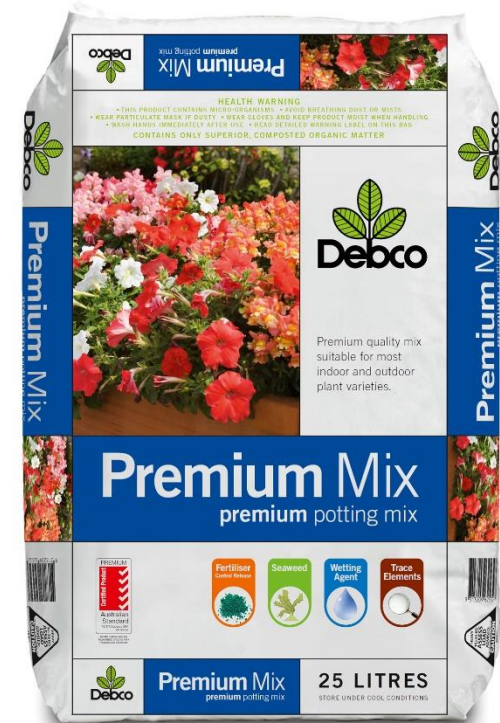
Set up considerations for containers

- Drainage
- Prone to drying out
- Mulch
- Still need adequate sunlight
- Frequency of watering and watering systems
- Fertilising
- Consider soil depth for root vegetables
- Containers need good quality potting mix especially fruit trees that might be in the pot for several years



Potting mix for containers

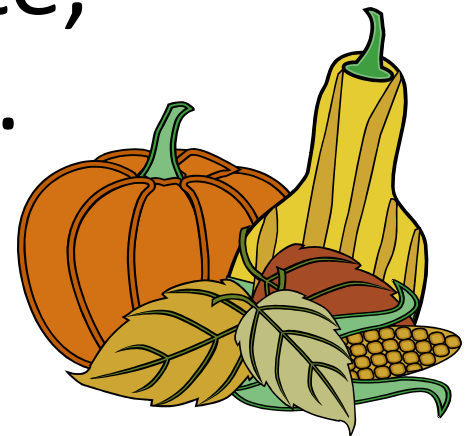
- Good quality potting mixes contain fertiliser, wetting agents and water retention crystals
- Use speciality mixes for special purposes (e.g. vegetables, citrus, roses)
- Read the label and look for the red ticks



Water Saving In Your Vegetable Garden

Increase the organic matter in your soil

- Compost
- Manures
- Mulch
- Charcoal
- Mineral additives such as perlite, vermiculite, zeolite improve aeration and water holding.



Water Saving In Your Vegetable Garden

Mulch

- Reduces water evaporation by up to 60%
- Insulates the soil
 - Cooler in summer
 - Warmer in winter
- Improves soil structure as it breaks down
- Minimises weed growth
- How thick?



Water Saving In Your Vegetable Garden

Use ollas or bottles

- Terracotta pots
- Slowly releases water into the surrounding soil.
- Can also be used above ground to cool the air around the plant



Water Saving In Your Vegetable Garden

Spikes for use with glass or PET bottles



Water Saving In Your Vegetable Garden

- When to water and how often
 - Early morning or evening are best
 - Water only when your garden needs it
 - Water the roots deeply, not the leaves
 - Watch the weather. Rainfall is a free and easy way to water your garden.
 - Be aware of your local water guidelines (restrictions) and water only when allowed.

Water Saving In Your Vegetable Garden

Some other tips:

- Controlling weeds reduces competition for water with your plants.
- Fertilise plants with organic liquid fertiliser or compost. Dry fertilisers take up some water from the soil and can raise salt levels.

Fertilising

- Feed the soil
- Organic fertilisers
- Inorganic fertilisers
- Liquid feed
- Green manure
- Weed tea
- Worm tea



Fertilising

- Liquid feed examples



Other considerations ...

- If you have limited space, choose vegetables you like to eat, are expensive to buy or hard to find.
- Fast-growing vegetables such as radish, lettuce and basil can be grown in the same container as larger plants such as tomatoes
- Don't grow vegetables that take up a large amount of space (such as pumpkins and zucchini) or take months to grow (such as parsnips and asparagus).

Other considerations ...

- Start small and increase the size of the patch as you go.
- Grow what you can manage
 - Physical effort
 - Time available
 - Space
- If you've got children or grandchildren – get them involved.

Perennials v Biennials v Annuals

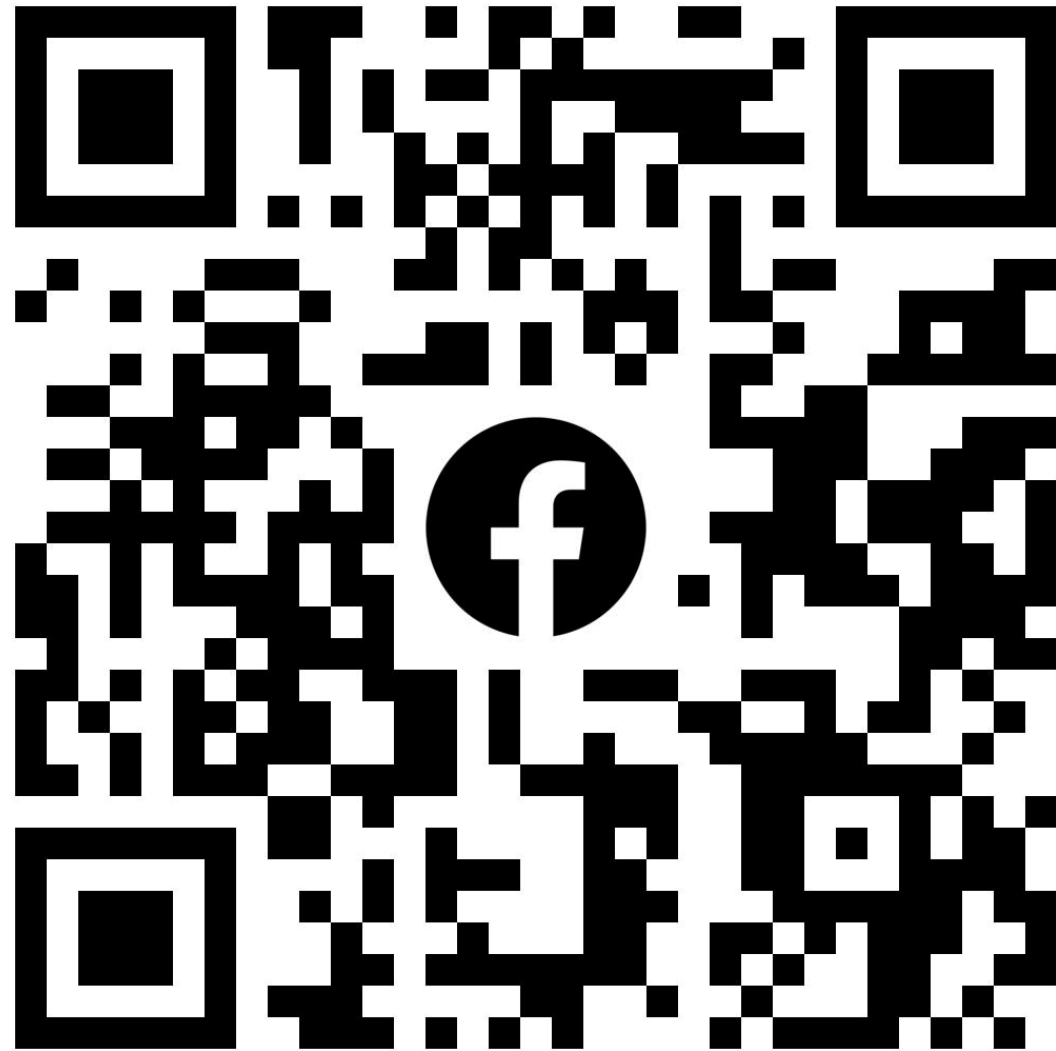
- Perennial plants grow for two or more years
e.g. asparagus, rhubarb, fruit trees, herbs
- Plant perennials in your permanent bed
- Biennials complete their life cycle in two years e.g. onions, shallots, beets
- Annuals complete their life cycle in one season e.g. tomato, beans, cucumber
- Annuals and biennials should be part of your crop rotation plan



Planting Guides and Planners

- [Gardenate](#) (web and iPad App)
- [Gardening Australia](#) (web and iPad App)
- [Mr Fothergills](#) (web and iPad App)
- Diggers Club
- Spreadsheets
- Gardening Books and Magazines

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