



Planning an Intensive Garden

The purpose of gardening intensively is to harvest as much produce as possible from a given space. More traditional gardens consist of long, single rows of vegetables spaced widely apart. In this type of garden, much of the area is taken by the space between the rows. An intensive garden minimizes wasted space. The practice of intensive gardening is not just for those with limited garden space; rather, an intensive garden concentrates your work efforts to create an ideal plant environment, giving better yields.

The ideal intensive garden produces continuously throughout the growing season. It requires early, thorough planning to make the best use of your time and space. Before planting, consider the interrelationships of the plants you wish to grow, their nutrient needs, shade tolerance, growth patterns, and preferred growing seasons. Using the techniques described below and on the accompanying handout, you can develop a high-yielding intensive garden.

Planning an Intensive Garden

Begin planning your garden in January or February when the cold days of winter seem never-ending. Pull out last year's garden records and dig into your new seed catalogs. Decide which crops you want to grow and how much to grow based on your family's likes and dislikes. An account of which cultivars were most successful or tasted best is useful in making choices. Use the Master Gardener charts available, the information below and your own experience to determine which crops are likely combinations to grow in your area.

An intensive garden requires planning, but the time saved while working in the garden and the increased yields make it well worthwhile.

Economic Value of Various Crops

Although the food you grow in your garden is generally so much better than anything you can buy in the store, it may be helpful in deciding what to plant to look at the economics. Of course, your family's preferences should be the primary determining factor; if no one likes beets, there is no point in growing them just because they are economically valuable. But, especially where space is limited, determining which crops can be grown more inexpensively in your own garden can help in deciding what to plant. Judging the economic value of the crops you grow is difficult due to the different lengths of time they require for maturity and harvest, the availability of varieties and types not generally found in the marketplace, and the lack of comparison values for vegetables that are not acceptable by commercial standards (cracked tomatoes, crooked cucumbers, etc.), but which are perfectly useable for the home gardener. However, several studies have attempted to determine which crops bring the most value per square foot of garden space. The list below may help you determine which vegetables to plant and which to buy. Note that perennial

crops are not on the list below because each of the studies was on a one-season basis. However, asparagus, rhubarb, horseradish, artichokes, strawberries and other perennial crops have considerable economic worth. Fruit trees and shrubs are also valuable producers, especially when you consider the long term.

The top 15 annual vegetable crops in terms of economic value are:

- ✓ Tomatoes
- ✓ Beans (pole and bush)
- ✓ Beets
- ✓ Broccoli
- ✓ Carrots
- ✓ Chard
- ✓ Cucumbers
- ✓ Green onions
- ✓ Lettuce (head and leaf)
- ✓ Onions
- ✓ Peas (edible pods)
- ✓ Peppers
- ✓ Summer squash
- ✓ Turnips

Corn, melons, pumpkins and winter squash have the least economic value, especially where space is limited. However, growing the melons, pumpkins and squashes vertically on some form of trellis would increase the value per square foot.

Crop Spacing

In an intensive garden the plant spacing is much tighter than in traditional vegetable gardens. Whereas in traditional gardens, there are long rows of empty soil between crops, in an intensive garden, the fully grown plants are very close together and there is little, if any, open ground. The chart below gives plant spacing for an intensive garden.

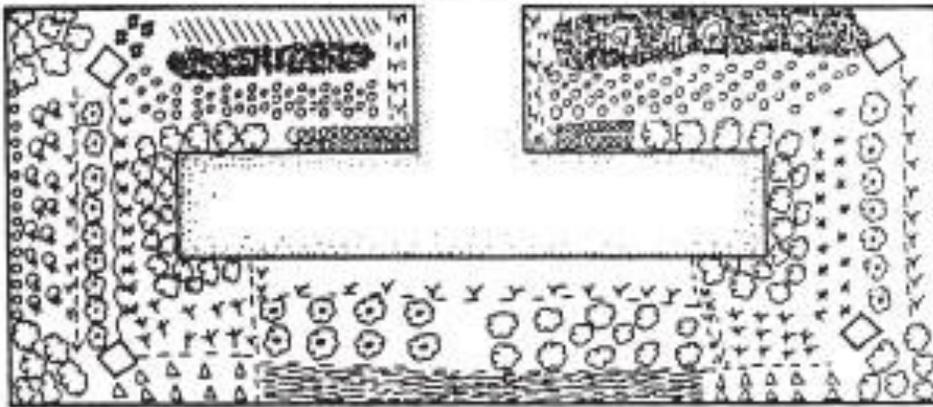
Note that, when interplanting two or more different crops together, it is important to calculate the spacing correctly. The chart below gives spacing for each individual crop. When planting two different crops together, take the space in inches for the two crops (if a crop you are using is not listed below, take the measurement from the seed packet), add them together and divide the total by 2. For example, if you are planting radishes and beans together, add the spacing recommended for radishes (2") to the spacing recommended for beans (4") and divide it by 2 ($2''+4''=6''\div 2=3''$). The spacing between the two different crop plants should, therefore, be 3".

INTENSIVE SPACING GUIDE

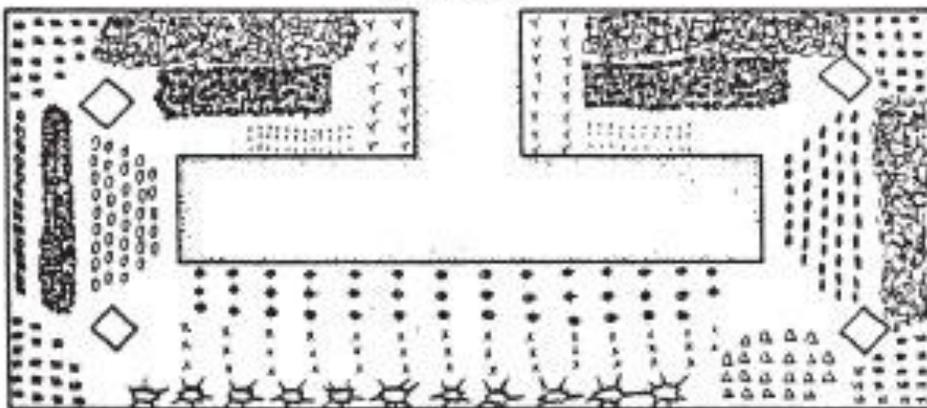
<i>Plant</i>	<i>Spacing</i>	<i>Plant</i>	<i>Spacing (inches)</i>
Asparagus	15" – 18"	Leeks	3" – 6"
Bean (bush)	4" – 6"	Lettuce (head)	10" – 12"
Bean (lima)	4" – 6"	Lettuce (leaf)	4" – 6"
Bean (pole)	6" – 12"	Melons	18" - 24"
Beets	2" – 4"	Mustard greens	6" – 9"
Broccoli	12" – 18"	Okra	12" – 18"
Brussels sprouts	15" – 18"	Onions	2" – 4"
Cabbage	15" – 18"	Peas	2" – 4"
Cabbage, Chinese	10" – 12"	Peas, Southern	3" – 4"
Carrots	2" – 3"	Peppers	12" – 15"
Cauliflower	15" – 18"	Potatoes	10" – 12"
Cucumber	12" – 18"	Pumpkins	24" – 36"
Chard, Swiss	6" – 9"	Radishes	2" – 3"
Collards	12" – 15"	Rutabaga	4" – 6"
Corn, sweet	15" – 18"	Spinach	4" – 6"
Endive	15" – 18"	Squash, summer	18" – 24"
Eggplant	18" – 24"	Squash, winter	24" – 36"
Kale	15" – 18"	Tomatoes	18" – 24"
Kohlrabi	6" – 9"	Turnips	4" – 6"

An Intensive Garden Plan for the Maximum Harvest

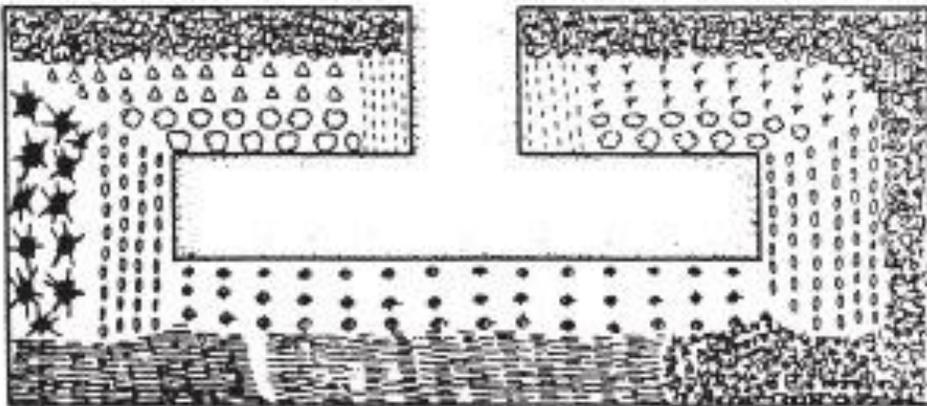
SPRING



MID SEASON



FALL



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|--------------|----------|--------------|
| HEAD LETTUCE | BEETS | SCALLIONS |
| LETTUCE | ONION | SUGAR SNAPS |
| PEAS | RADISH | BEANS |
| SHALLOTS | CABBAGE | BUSH BEANS |
| BROCCOLI | PAK CHOI | PEPPERS |
| TURNIPS | TOMATOES | EGGPLANT |
| MUSTARD | ZUCCHINI | CUCUMBER |
| CAULIFLOWER | CARROTS | CHINESE CABB |
| SPINACH | | KALE |