

Shepherd's Corner Ecology Center
2020 Plant Sale Care Guide

Tomatoes:

- Space the plants about 3 feet apart, giving them a lot of room between plants and place in full sun.
- Remove the lower leaves so you can bury the plants deeply in the soil. Fertilize tomatoes when you first plant them in the garden, and you can again when they start setting fruit.
- Do not touch tomatoes first thing in the morning, as morning dew can spread disease. Wait until tomato plants are completely dry before touching. As their leaves dislike getting too wet, water directly at their base. Plants generally require about 1-1.5 inches of water per week.
- Indeterminate tomatoes will continue to grow as long as you give them space to trellis them. Tomatoes will create multiple stems that shoot off and produce more fruit. Prune these shoots, called suckers, so that more energy can be directed into growing the fruit. Try to remove when they are small enough to pinch with your fingers, but if you have to cut them use sanitized pruners and make a clean cut close to the main stem. Remove all leafy clusters below the first fruit development so that they do not slow the growth of the fruit. You can continue pruning all suckers as they appear, or only cut off the leaflets at the end of each sucker so that more foliage develops as shade to protect the fruit sunscald.

Peppers and eggplant:

- Space the plants about 2 feet apart in full sun.
- You do not need to fertilize at the time of planting. If you do later in the season, look for a 5-10-10 fertilizer, or one that is higher in phosphorus and potassium than nitrogen. Do not spray the foliage, but direct the fertilizer to the base of the plant.
- Water in moderation, allow for the soil to drain before watering again. They are likely to wilt in the middle of the day, and recover at night, but if they look wilted in the mornings they need water. Water on the leaves is likely to spread disease, so water only at the base of the plant.

Kale and collards:

- Plant about 12 to 18 inches apart for kale and collards and lettuce 12 inches apart in partial sun or a shady location as these are cool season crops.
- Harvest early in the morning in order to get the best flavor. Harvest by pinching the lower leaves from the base of the plant as close as possible. Too much stem left on the plant can encourage aphids.
- During times of heavy rainfall, these plants won't need additional watering. Keep the first few inches evenly moist but don't over-water.

Cucumbers and zucchini:

- Plant in full sun about 3 feet apart if you are not trellising the cucumbers.
- Cucumbers and zucchini require about 1 inch of water per week. Avoid watering the foliage as this could cause for disease to develop.
- During the height of production, check these plants nearly every day as the fruit grows quickly. If a fruit is left on the branch for too long, it will lose its flavor and take energy away from the smaller fruit that is still setting.
- Optional that once blossoms develop you could apply a balanced, all purpose fertilizer.

Winter squash:

- Provide adequate spacing for the plants to vine, about 3-5 feet and place in full sun.
- Winter squash prefer a long, slow soak. Do not water the foliage. If the soil about 3 inches down is still moist, the plants will be fine. Wait for the soil to dry out before watering again. Cut off watering about 3 weeks before harvest.
- You can fertilize with an all purpose fertilizer once the seedlings emerge and right after the blossoms set. Do not fertilize before the blossoms as this will only encourage foliage growth.
- You can check if winter squash is ready to harvest by the color and texture. Use your nail to poke the skin, if it resists being punctured, it is ready to be picked. Cut the plant and leave about an inch of the vine attached. Wipe down the plants and cure in a cool, dark, dry place for 4 weeks in order for these to last you for several months. If not cured, eat within 10-14 days.