Organic Growers School

Spring Conference
Beginning Gardening

Leave something wild
Garden organically
Know your soil
Feed the soil
Welcome diversity
Invite failure
Be generous with your harvest

--Adapted from Wendy Johnson
Site Considerations

- Sunshine
- Size
- Proximity to House (or work)
- Proximity to Water
- Shelter From Wind
- Microclimates
- Quality of Native Soil
Design Details

• Site, size, dimensions
• Orientation
• Access and maintenance
• What’s your style?
Double Dug Beds
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Material</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strat</td>
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<td>Spent Hops</td>
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<td>Leaf Mulch</td>
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<td>Grass Clippings</td>
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<td>Straw</td>
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<td>Manure</td>
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<td>Leaf Mulch</td>
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<td>Food Scraps</td>
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<td>Cardboard/News</td>
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**Lasagna Garden**
Raised Beds
To Seed or Not to Seed

• Better performance for some varieties
• More choice
• Can be risky
• Importance of thinning
• More cost-effective
• Weeds

Photo by OGS
123people.com
Benefits of Transplants

- More control
- Head start
- Weed control
- Succession planting
- Immediate gratification
Veggies to direct seed:
• Beans, Beets, Carrots, Melons, Peas, Radish, Spinach, Squashes, Turnips, Zucchini, Potatoes, Lettuce

Veggies to transplant or start in trays:
• Beets, Tomato, Pepper, Eggplant, Celery, Greens, Leeks, Onion, Scallions, Lettuce
Direct Seed Techniques

- Rows
- Square-foot
- Broadcast
- Stale-bedding technique
Grow Your Own Transplants

You will need:
• A warm place with *plenty of direct light*!
• Soil mix should be light and well-drained
• Pots, plug trays, soil blocks, or seed boxes
• Source of water for gentle, consistent moisture
• Labels
Make Your Own Soil Mix

• 1 part compost
• 1 part garden soil
• 1 part sifted leaf mould
• 1 part sharp sand or granite rock
COMPOSTING 101

- Composting is a method of speeding up natural decay processes.
- Decomposed material is nature’s fertilizer.
- Organic material + microorganisms + optimum carbon to nitrogen ratio (C:N) + heat = COMPOST!
Design Options

• Choose an out-of-the-way place, not too close to creek or stream (leachate can be ammonia-rich)
• Shade or covered structure
• Build it: chicken wire or palettes
• Free-standing
How to make Compost

- Dig a spit, layer with woody materials
- Soil
- Nitrogen rich materials
- Soil
- Carbon Rich materials
- Soil
- Water
Maintenance

- Size
- Cold vs. Hot
- Water
Application

- Ready when?
- Sifting
- How to apply

Chune123.blogspot.com
Planting Your Garden

- Plan
- Plant what you love to eat + 1-2 adventure crops/season
- Diversity
- Keep a journal
- Feed the soil
How Much Do I Plant?

• How many fresh servings of your favorite vegetables can you eat each week?
• Do you plan to can, freeze, or otherwise preserve your harvest?
• Do you want harvest to share?
Spacing

- Plant on centers
- Plant intensively
- Microclimates
- Grow vertically
- Online guides
Soil Fertility

FEED THE SOIL and the SOIL will feed YOUR PLANT
Principles of Maintaining Healthy Soil

• Top on the top, bottom on the bottom
• Keep it covered
• Don’t disturb it
• Maintain living roots at all times
• Diversity and architecture
Just ONE TEASPOON of soil contains between 100 MILLION and 1 BILLION bacteria.

Build it & they will come.
Add ORGANIC MATTER to Your Soil...routinely & regularly
Watering

• One inch per week

• Water deeply but infrequently

• Daily water seeds and new transplants
Weeding

Weeds as allies and teachers
Weeds as soil coverage
Weeds as “sacrificial lambs”
Techniques for managing
Fertilize Regularly

Observe your plants
Foliar feed/ Soil Drench
Side-dress
Harvest Regularly
Leave something wild