

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to: Know How Much to Plant per Person in a Vegetable Garden

It's never a bad thing for a gardener to have too many vegetables. You can always find something to do with the extras, whether you sell them at a farmers market, give them as gifts or utilize methods like canning to keep fresh ingredients, sauces, jams, etc. on hand for colder months down the road. However, it's not nearly as good when you don't have enough harvest to supply for your family. Another issue is what if your family absolutely devours certain vegetables while not eating nearly as much when it comes to others? What is the rule of thumb to go by when it comes to planting the right amount of each vegetable so your family is well-fed throughout the harvest season?

How to garden for a family:

When it comes to growth, you want to produce the most harvest in as little space as possible to best utilize the garden. Typically, gardeners will see the most yield from planting their vegetables in wide rows down the garden. A general rule of thumb to follow is to allow approximately 200 square feet of growth per person in your family. Add a little more if you plan on canning or preserving for months after the harvest.

When picking which vegetables to plant, be smart in that some vegetables take up much more space than others. For example, vegetables like squash, pumpkins or melons may be favorites among the kiddos, but they take up more space in the garden because they are vining plants.



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Succession planting:

To get the most out of your space while growing all different kinds of your favorite vegetables, try out succession planting. Succession planting is where you only plant a few feet of a certain vegetable in a row, but you plant more every two to three weeks so you can have a continuous harvest. Also be sure to utilize cool- and warm-weather crops because these will come to harvest at different times.

Example amounts of certain vegetables to plant:

For a family of four, here are some example amounts to plant for some of the most popular plants to provide a harvest large enough for everyone to enjoy. Clearly adjust the following numbers according to your family – if someone is a tomato fiend, be sure to plant more tomato plants than other vegetables to account for that.



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Broccoli: Five plants

Asparagus: 40 plants

Carrots: 10 feet of plants

Cucumbers: Two hills

Leaf Lettuce: 10 feet of plants

Peppers: Three plants, but add a fourth or fifth if you want to can them.

Tomatoes: Five plants, but add several more if you plan on canning pasta sauce or salsa to use later in the season.

Zucchini: Four plants

Another tip is planting vegetables that have a quick growth period, like radishes. Radishes can be ready for harvest in less than a month, freeing up that space in the garden for other vegetables later on in the season.

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