

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to: Succession Planting

In certain zones where growing seasons are short, gardeners can utilize something called succession planting to maximize their harvest and ensure a steady stream of vegetables is available at all times and there are no gaps in your growing season.

What is succession planting?

Succession planting is a method used by gardeners as a way to continually have vegetables in the ground, as vegetables' peak growing seasons can differ from one another. There are two main ways to implement succession planting into your garden: in intervals and in what is called the "fill a gap" style of planting.

Interval succession planting is best used for vegetables with a short growing period. To plant in intervals, you begin by sowing seeds once it is time to plant in your area. Then, once a few weeks have passed, you sow some more of the same seed. Continue to sow more seeds every two weeks until you have sown all the seeds you plan on planting in the garden. The interval planting allows the gardener to have a steady flow of vegetables ready to harvest. Sometimes, if interval planting isn't used and a vegetable is ready to harvest all at the same time, some of the harvest can go to waste because there's too much all at once. By planting in intervals, it allows a smaller amount of the vegetable to become available and lengthens the season of growth.

Succession planting also can be used by the "fill a gap" method, which is where gardeners plant all of their supplies like they



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would normally. Once the vegetable is ready to harvest, harvest it, but immediately plant a different vegetable in its empty spot. This works well for planting a cool-season crop in the early months of spring and once it harvests in late spring, plant a warm-weather crop in its place.

Tips and Tricks:

There are ways to maximize and improve your succession planting, such as grouping similar vegetables together. Since similar crops generally share similar living condition requirements, it makes caring for them easier if they are grouped together.

Another trick to succession planting, especially if utilizing the "fill a gap" method, is choosing vegetables that mature early. Although succession planting can be used for vegetables with a longer growing season like zucchini, early-maturing vegetables harvest sooner and are then sooner able to be replaced by a new



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vegetable. Early-maturing vegetables include radishes, lettuce, bush beans and more.

To quicken your succession planting, prior to the original vegetables being harvested and replaced by new ones, begin the new ones in pots or seed trays. This way, they can get a head start while the original vegetables are still finishing their growth period. Once harvested, you then transplant the new vegetables into the old one's previous spot.

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