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Suburban Gardener

Vegetables Fun, Cheap To Grow

By BETTY FRANKEL

Does it pay to grow your own vegetables? The answer depends on how you do the figuring. There are stories told of home-grown tomatoes that cost the gardener \$25 apiece, but such a price undoubtedly includes a new tractor or a gold-plated garden hoe as well as the gardener's pay at the same rate as a top-flight consulting engineer or a medical specialist.

The economics gets rather complicated, but there can be a great deal of satisfaction in growing fresh produce for your own table.

There is a definite sense of accomplishment in growing beans that are tenderer than those you can buy, tomatoes sweeter, radishes crispier. If you don't attempt too large a garden, it is fun and not too much work. And with a little bit of luck, the crop you plant will yield enough for the family needs plus a little bit to share with the neighbors.

The initial investment in seeds or small plants does not run into a major fortune.

THERE ARE A FEW basic things to keep in mind. Choose a sunny spot for the garden. Vegetables do not grow well at all in the shade.

Prepare the soil well. Have it plowed if the area is large or if small turn it with a spade. If the soil is poor - infertile, sandy, or heavy clay - it pays to work in a liberal supply of organic material such as well rotted manure, compost, or even peat moss. Also, spread commercial chemical fertilizer over the soil and then rake until it is smooth and free of lumps, stones and weeds.

CHOOSE vegetables that the family enjoys. There's not much point in planting rows and rows of spinach if the kids just won't eat it.

A home vegetable garden gives you a chance to grow unusual specialties that are not available in the stores. You might try black-eyed peas or okra if southern cooking is your specialty, or pea-pods if you like chinese cooking.

Seeds of the more unusual items may have to be ordered by mail from a seed company. More common varieties can be found in packets in groceries and other shops or at local seed or hardware stores.

Check the packets before planting and allow enough space between the rows. Spacing is gained by crowding. The plants are stunted and it is difficult to weed and pick if rows are squeezed together.

TALL PLANTS should be grouped at one end of the garden so they will not shade low plants. It is also helpful to run the rows north and south.

Some vegetables are generally grown from little plants that have been started earlier in a greenhouse. These include tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, broccoli and several others.

However, some are best grown from seeds planted where they are to grow as they do not transplant easily. These include peas, green beans, corn, and squash.

A half-pound of green bean seeds will plant about 50 feet of row and should yield about 25 pounds of snap beans or 2 1/2 bushels of pole beans.

Twelve tomato plants require about fifty feet of row space and should produce about 12 pounds of tomatoes per plant, or a total of 144 pounds.

IF SPACE is limited, it's still fun to grow a few vegetables. A large pot on the terrace can have a tomato train ed to a tall stake with a ring of leaf lettuce and radishes at the base.

Even apartment dwellers can grow some vegetables in a sunny window box, and a hanging pot of tiny cherry tomatoes can be very decorative as well as a real "conversation piece."

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1/3 x 6/8	✓
1/4 x 6/8	✓
1/8 x 6/8	✓
2/0 x 6/8	✓
2/2 x 6/8	✓
2/6 x 6/8	✓
2/8 x 6/8	✓
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2/8 x 6/8	✓
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