

The Mini-plot - a year's supply in 40m²

Growing your own vegetables is the single most important step to a sustainable, healthy life. When vegetables are grown at home they are fresh and free of chemicals, eliminating food miles and cutting CO₂ emissions by up to 30%. It takes a few hours of work a week.

In just 40 square metres you can grow 472kg of vegetables which is enough for four people. So just 10m² will feed one person (see yields opposite).

WHERE TO START

Vegetables need plenty of sun in order to grow, so choose a spot in your garden that receives at least 6 hours of sun per day. Make sure that you can water it easily so that your vegetables will be succulent and productive.

You will need only 22,800L of annual supplementary water, which can be produced by a 7000L tank.

PREPARE YOUR SOIL

Healthy, organic food draws its goodness from the soil, so make sure your soil is brimming with vitality, with generous quantities of well rotted manure.

Prepare your beds well by removing weeds and digging the area to break up the soil. This means that direct-sown seeds make contact with fine, moist soil for quick germination. Digging over the soil should take no more than a weekend's work.

CROP ROTATION

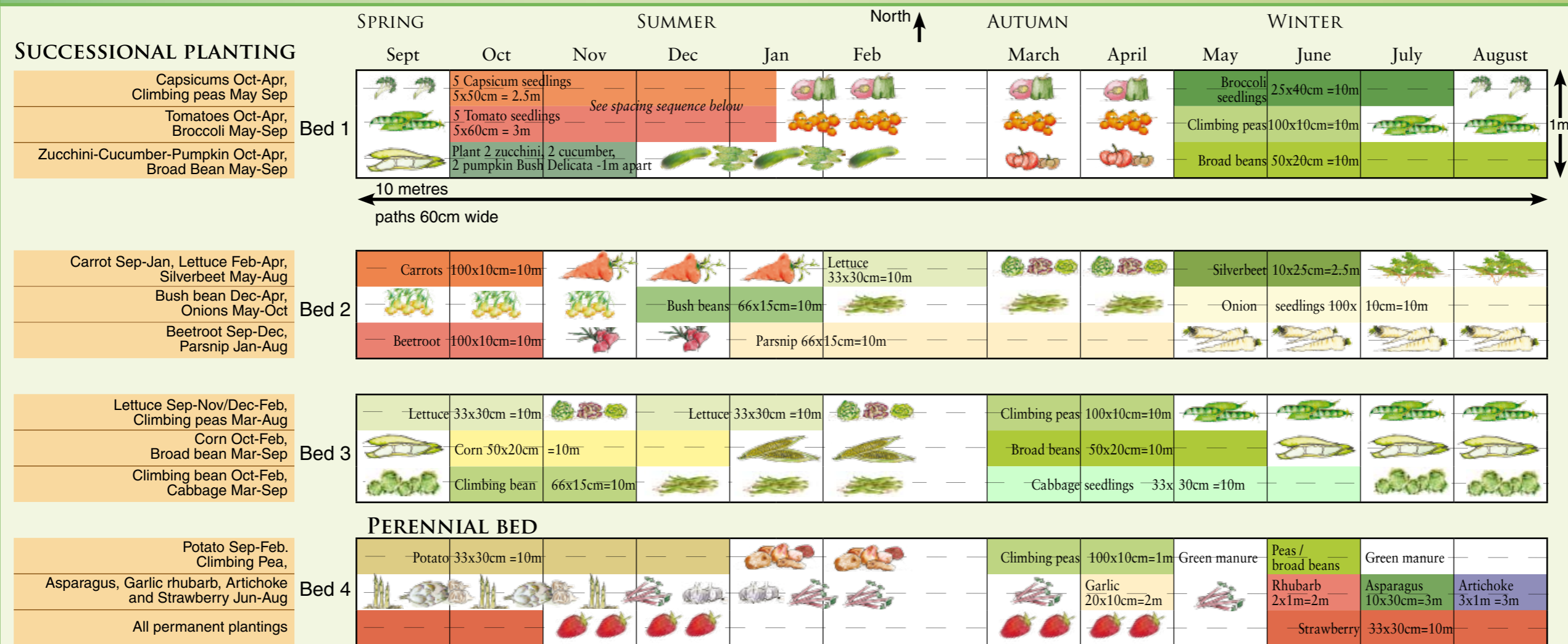
To minimise nutrition depletion, rotate soil improvers after heavy and light feeders. Dig in compost and blood and bone, then apply mulch after harvest to boost organic matter, worm activity and fertility.

Don't plant the same vegetables in the same place two seasons running. By changing what you grow where, you will prevent pests and diseases building up in the soil.



MINI-PLOT PLANTING AND HARVEST PLAN

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CROP	HARVEST MONTH	YIELD (APPROX.)
Greens - Heavy feeders, apply compost, blood & bone (100 grams per metre) or follow with soil improvers		
Lettuce	Nov Feb - Apr	99 plants = 20kg
Cabbage	Jul - Sep	33 plants = 53kg
Broccoli	Jul - Sep	25 plants = 25kg
Silverbeet	Jul - Aug	10 plants = 5kg
Fruits - Heavy feeders, repeat above		
Tomato	Jan - Apr	5 plants = 75kg
Capsicum	Feb - Apr	5 plants = 10kg
Cucumber	Dec - Feb	2 plants = 10kg
Zucchini	Dec - Feb	2 plants = 10kg
Pumpkin	Mar - Apr	2 plants = 6kg
Strawberry	Nov - Dec Mar - Apr	33 plants = 16kg
Sweet corn	Jan - Feb	50 plants = 35kg
Potato	Jan - Feb	33 plants = 50kg
Pods/Seeds - Soil improvers, puts nitrogen back into soil		
Pea	May - Sep	200 plants = 10kg
Broad bean	Jun - Sep	100 plants = 20kg
Beans	Feb - Apr	132 plants = 50kg
Roots - Light feeders, apply compost, blood & bone or follow with soil improvers		
Carrot	Nov - Jan	100 plants = 20kg
Parsnip	May - Jul	66 plants = 12kg
Beetroot	Nov - Dec	100 plants = 20kg
Onion	Sep - Oct	100 plants = 25kg
Garlic	Dec - Jan	20 plants = 600g
		Total = 472.6 kg

CULTURAL GUIDES

► **Beds**
10m long and 1m wide.
Most crops are sown in straight rows 30cm apart, providing 3 lines. First row 20cm from edge, 2nd row 50cm and third row 80cm from edge.

► **Spacing**
Plant spacing is marked at time of sowing (ie: 5 tomatoes spaced at 60cm = 3m)

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► **Months to grow**
(identified by colour panel) leading to harvest (identified by fruit drawings), ie. tomato -120 days followed by 90 harvest days.

► **Seed or seedlings**
Seeds are directly sown into soil except for tomatoes, capsicums, broccoli, cabbage and onion, which are raised as seedlings 6 weeks earlier.

► **Water**
22,800L needed for 40m².
Supplementary water is 19% of average roof catchment or 26% of grey water potential.
See page 32-35