

HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER

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Planting Vegetables in the Landscape

As we inch closer to planting time for warm season vegetables you may want to think about incorporating vegetables into more than just the garden. Front yard vegetables not only increase your gardening space, but can also add unique interest to the landscape.

Front yard gardening with vegetables does require a little more planning since it is so visible to the public. Here are a few tips on ways to effectively incorporate edibles into your landscape.

Start by intermixing vegetables and flowers together. Most homes have established flower beds of some sort and it is simple to intermix a few vegetables with the flowers. It can be a fun challenge to see how many vegetables you can “hide” in your landscape. Peppers are a great vegetable to mix in with flowers. Consider adding marigolds to the planting as well to help attract beneficial insects. You can even plant edible flowers. Nasturtiums, pansies, and violas are edible and the flower parts and leaves can be added to salads.

Some vegetables and herbs can even be used for borders. Swiss Chard, spinach, lettuce and greens can make a very attractive border. Many herbs like oregano, basil, chives, and others will also work great as a border in a landscape. Make use of succession planting (planting the same vegetable/herb a few days to weeks apart) for a continual harvest. In order to maintain beauty, regularly pick a few of the outside leaves on lettuce, chard, kale etc... This will continue to stimulate more growth without detracting from the plant beauty in the landscape.

If larger vegetables are desired in the front landscape take size and location into consideration. It may be best to plant larger growing vegetables up close to the house. Plants like tomatoes, corn and okra grow large and won't look so out of place if they are planted near a tall structure like a house or garage.

Many vegetables grow on vines and these can be easily adapted to the front yard by building a nice trellis or arbor that fits in with current landscaping. Cucumbers and pole beans work great this way. Two interesting bean options for a trellis or arbor include Scarlet Runner beans which produce bright red flowers and grow quickly, and Hyacinth beans which produce purple flowers with lavender pods.

Other interesting options for front yard vegetable gardening include: ornamental and regular pepper plants, kohlrabi, Red Rubin basil, lemon squash, cabbage, sweet potatoes, 'Listada De Gandia' eggplant, 'Russian Red' kale, and 'Dwarf Gray Sugar' peas.

Be careful with pesticide and herbicide applications if you are growing edible plants in your landscape beds. Remind any applicators who may be on the property to be careful if they will be using chemicals near any plants that are edible.