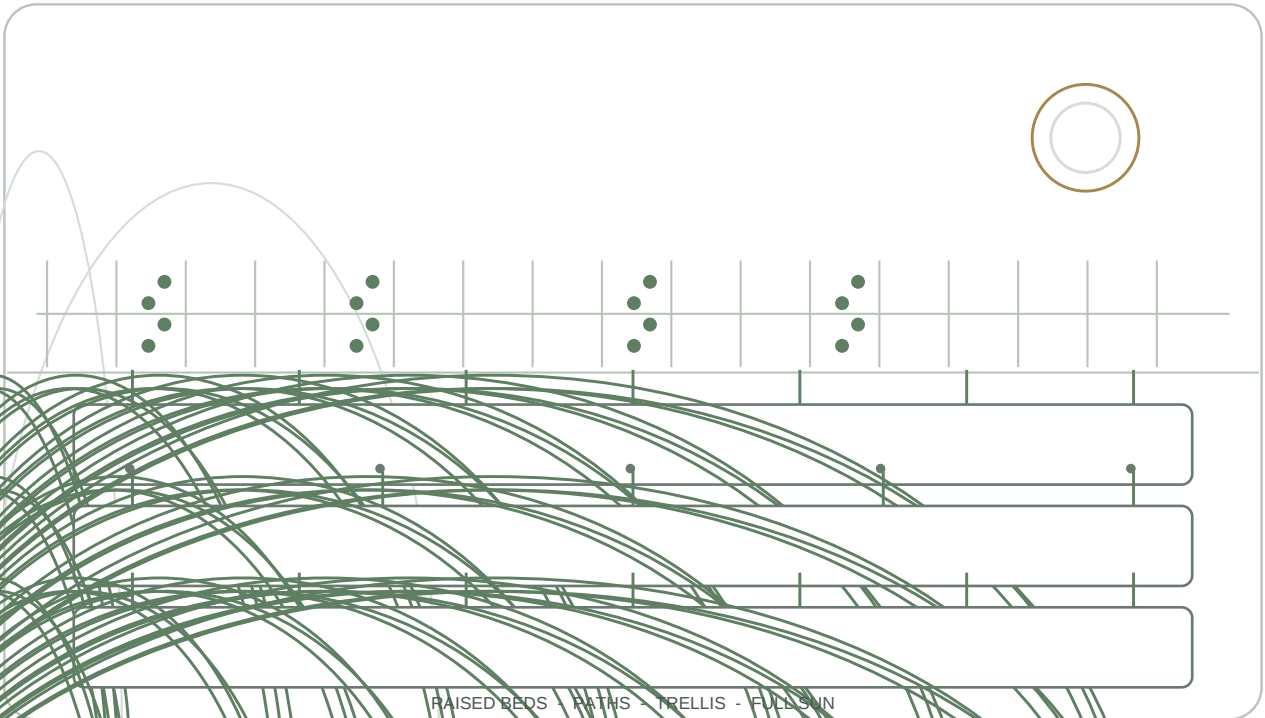


FREE PRINTABLE GUIDE - BEGINNER FRIENDLY - PRINT OR TYPE DIRECTLY

THE BEGINNER VEGETABLE GARDEN STARTER KIT

Plan - Plant - Grow - Harvest

A practical printable guide for planning and organizing
your vegetable garden - from first sketch to first harvest.



RAISED BEDS - PATHS - TRELLIS - FULL SUN

An organized home vegetable garden: defined beds, clear paths, and room to grow.

FREE RESOURCE FROM
Paliurus.com

Print-optimized (ink-friendly) - Fillable fields - Type or write by hand

Tip: this PDF is interactive. Click any title below to jump there. Use the bottom bar (Contents | Plan | Plant | Grow | Harvest) from any page. All underlined areas accept typing; or print and write by hand.

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Print tip: print pages 4-5, 10 and 12-15 multiple times - they are designed for reuse.

WELCOME TO YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN

Successful vegetable gardening starts long before you sow the first seed - it starts with a simple plan. This Starter Kit gives you calm, practical worksheets to help you organize your space, choose what to grow, and keep track of what you do.

You do not need a large plot or years of experience. You need a sunny spot, a short list of vegetables you actually like to eat, and a notebook habit. This kit walks you through exactly that - on screen or on paper.

What this Starter Kit helps you do

- ✓ **Decide what to grow**
Pick beginner-friendly crops you will enjoy.
- ✓ **Plan your space**
Measure, sketch, and use every metre well.
- ✓ **Understand spacing**
Give each plant room for air and light.
- ✓ **Organize planting**
Build a calendar around your frost dates.
- ✓ **Track watering**
Water with intention, not guesswork.
- ✓ **Stay organized**
Weekly checklists keep small tasks visible.
- ✓ **Record results**
Learn from each season and improve.

QUICK START - YOUR FIRST 7 STEPS

- 1 Choose your garden location
- 2 Measure your space
- 3 Choose vegetables
- 4 Plan spacing
- 5 Create your planting schedule
- 6 Start planting
- 7 Track your progress

Tip: work through the Measure to Calendar pages in order, then plant with confidence.

Measure Your Garden

Four things shape almost every decision: sunlight, available space, soil, and water access. Measure once, write it down (type or print), and every later choice becomes easier.

S SUNLIGHT 6-8+ hrs ideal	P SPACE Length x width	O SOIL Texture + drainage	W WATER Hose distance
---	--	---	---

My garden - fill this in

Click a line and type, or print and write.

Garden location: e.g. back garden, south-facing corner

Garden length:

Garden width:

Available growing area: beds + containers

Hours of direct sunlight (tick one):

Less than 4

4-6

6-8

8+

Water source (tick all that apply):

Hose

Rain barrel

Watering can

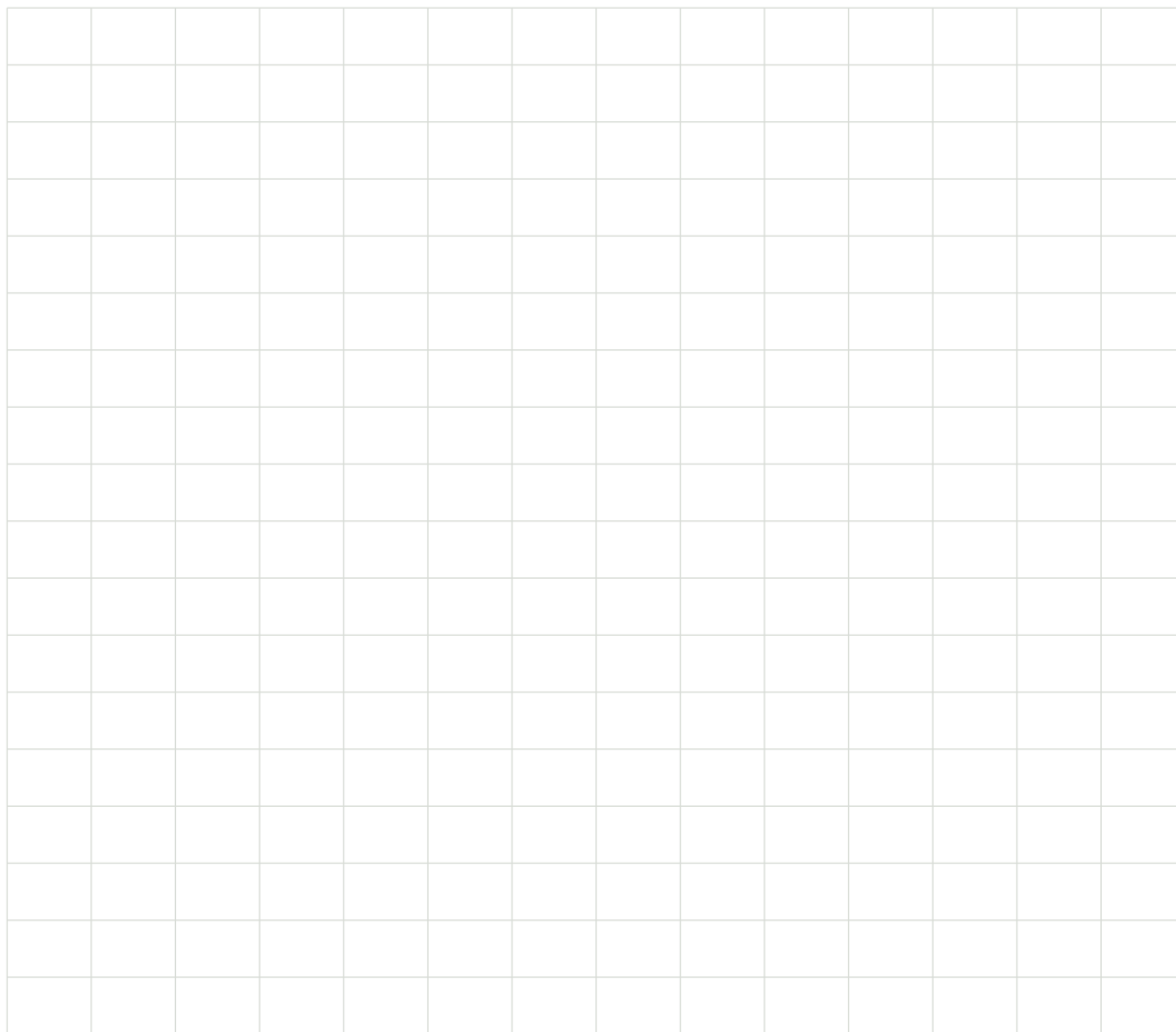
Other

Soil notes: sandy / clay / loamy? drains well? what grew here before?

Design Your Garden Layout

Sketch your garden before planting. Leave enough room to reach plants, water them, weed, and harvest. Print this page - or draw over it on a tablet.

Key: bed (solid) path (gap) container (circle) trellis (#) water (tap mark)



Mark on your sketch:

- Garden beds and sizes
- Paths (60 cm+ to walk)
- Containers and trellises
- Water source and tap distance

Leave room to work

Keep beds max. 120 cm wide so you can reach the middle from a path.

Tall plants north (or where they will not shade shorter crops).

Choose Your Vegetables

Grow what you like to eat and what suits your space. Tick below (click or print), then shortlist 4-6 crops for your first season.

VEGETABLE	I LIKE IT	EASY	TRY
Tomatoes			
Carrots			
Lettuce			
Radishes			
Beans (bush / climbing)			
Cucumbers			
Peppers (sweet)			
Zucchini / Courgette			
Spinach			
Kale			
Peas			
Beets / Beetroot			
Onions (sets)			
Broccoli			
Cabbage			
Eggplant / Aubergine			
Potatoes			
Swiss chard			
Turnips			
Herbs (basil, parsley...)			

My shortlist:

Vegetable Spacing Cheat Sheet

Crowded plants compete for light, water, and air. Use these approximate ranges as a starting point, then adjust for your variety and method.

VEGETABLE	PLANT SPACING	ROW SPACING	GROWING NOTES
Tomatoes	45-60 cm	60-90 cm	Stake or cage; prune for airflow.
Carrots	5-8 cm	20-30 cm	Thin seedlings; loose soil.
Lettuce	20-30 cm	25-35 cm	Pick outer leaves; sow again.
Radishes	2-5 cm	15-20 cm	Fast crop; sow little and often.
Beans (bush)	10-15 cm	40-50 cm	Pick often to extend harvest.
Beans (climbing)	10-15 cm	60-80 cm	Needs a trellis or canes.
Cucumbers	30-50 cm	90-120 cm	Trellis saves space.
Peppers	35-45 cm	50-60 cm	Warm spot; support branches.
Zucchini	70-90 cm	90-120 cm	One or two plants is plenty.
Spinach	8-12 cm	20-30 cm	Cool weather; part shade ok.
Kale	30-45 cm	45-60 cm	Harvest outer leaves first.
Peas	5-8 cm	60-75 cm	Netting or twigs to climb.
Beets	8-12 cm	25-35 cm	Thin to one strong seedling.
Onions (sets)	10-15 cm	25-30 cm	Plant shallow; keep weed-free.
Broccoli	40-50 cm	60-75 cm	Firm soil; net if needed.
Cabbage	35-50 cm	50-65 cm	Even water for firm heads.
Potatoes	30-35 cm	60-75 cm	Earth up stems as they grow.
Swiss chard	20-30 cm	35-45 cm	Forgiving; harvest outer leaves.

Always check the seed packet - spacing varies by cultivar and method.

[Go to Planting Calendar >](#)

How Much Sun Does Your Garden Get?

Sunlight is fuel. Most fruiting vegetables need generous sun, while many leafy crops tolerate a little less. Watch your plot through the day before deciding what goes where.

S

FULL SUN
6-8+ hours
of direct sun

Tomatoes, peppers,
cucumbers, beans

P

PARTIAL SUN
About 4-6 hours
of direct sun

Lettuce, spinach,
beets, carrots

H

SHADE
Less direct
sunlight

Few veg thrive here;
use for paths, shed

DAILY DIRECT SUN - A SIMPLE SCALE



Group vegetables by typical sunlight preference

LIGHT GROUP	TYPICAL VEGETABLES
Usually prefers full sun (6-8+ hrs)	Tomatoes, Peppers, Cucumbers, Beans, Zucchini, Eggplant, Potatoes, Peas
Tolerates partial sun (about 4-6 hrs)	Lettuce, Spinach, Kale, Swiss chard, Carrots, Beets, Radishes, Turnips
Adapts - check variety and climate	Broccoli, Cabbage, Onions, Herbs (basil loves sun; parsley copes with less)

Note: needs vary by variety and climate. In hot regions some full-sun crops like afternoon shade.

Simple Companion Planting Guide

Companion planting means placing crops that gardeners traditionally find grow well side by side - for shade, support, or to use space neatly. Think of it as friendly organization, not a guarantee.

MAIN CROP	COMMONLY PAIRED	WHY GARDENERS PAIR THEM
Tomatoes	Basil, lettuce, marigolds	Basil and lettuce use space below; flowers add diversity for pollinators.
Carrots	Onions, lettuce, radishes	Different root depths share a bed; fast radishes mark slow carrot rows.
Beans	Carrots, cucumbers, lettuce	Climbing beans use vertical space; low crops fill the ground beneath.
Cucumbers	Beans, peas, radishes	Trellised cucumbers free ground; low companions cover bare soil.
Lettuce	Carrots, radishes, herbs	Quick lettuce fits between slower crops and is picked before crowding.
Peppers	Basil, onions, tomatoes*	Similar warmth and water needs make care simple. *Give space.

A gentle, honest note

Evidence for companion planting is mixed. Use pairings as a starting point, observe your garden, and prioritize sunlight, spacing, soil, and water first.

Create Your Planting Calendar

Planting dates depend heavily on your local climate, last and first frost dates, and growing zone. Fill your frost dates first, then build your own calendar. Click any cell and type.

My local dates (fill in first - everything else follows)

Last spring frost:

First autumn frost:

Zone:

MONTH	START SEEDS	TRANSPLANT	DIRECT SOW / HARVEST
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			

Tip: write in pencil if printing - you will refine dates every season.

[< Back to Spacing Guide](#)

Seed Starting Checklist

Work down this list each time you sow. Click boxes to tick on screen, or print and tick by hand.

Choose seeds

Pick varieties suited to your season length and space.

Check expiration / viability

Old seed germinates poorly. Check the packet date.

Prepare containers

Clean pots, trays, or cells with drainage holes.

Prepare growing medium

Use a fine, free-draining seed-starting mix.

Label containers

Variety + date sown. You will forget - everyone does.

Plant seeds

Sow at the depth on the packet; firm gently.

Provide appropriate moisture

Evenly moist, never soggy. A fine mist helps.

Provide appropriate light

Bright light after germination prevents legginess.

Monitor germination

Check daily; note dates to learn what is normal.

Thin seedlings if necessary

Keep the strongest; snip extras at soil level.

Harden seedlings before transplanting

Introduce outdoor sun and wind over 7-10 days.

My sowing record

One record per variety - duplicate by printing.

Seed variety:

Date planted:

Expected germination:

Weekly Watering Tracker

Check the soil first, note rainfall, then water the root zone. Type directly into the tracker - or print several copies.



Check soil first
finger-test 2-3 cm down



Water deeply
roots, not just leaves



Mind weather
skip after good rain

PLANT / BED	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	NOTES

Key: type W = watered, R = rain, - = skipped. No fixed schedule beats checking the soil.

My Weekly Garden Checklist

Ten minutes, twice a week, prevents most big problems. Tick boxes on screen or on paper.

Check soil moisture

Finger-test each bed before watering.

Inspect plants

Look at new growth - it tells the story first.

Look for pests

Under leaves and at stem bases; mornings are best.

Check leaves for symptoms

Spots, yellowing, wilting? Note plant and place.

Remove weeds

Little and often; disturb roots as little as possible.

Check supports and trellises

Tie in new growth; tighten loose strings.

Harvest ripe vegetables

Frequent picking keeps beans and cucumbers producing.

Remove damaged material

Bin diseased leaves; do not home-compost if unsure.

Record observations

One sentence in your journal beats a good memory.

Plan next week's tasks

Sowings, transplants, feeding - write the top three.

Notes for this week - Week of:

Garden Journal

A few honest lines each visit teach you more than any book. Click and type - one printed sheet per visit also works.

Date:

Weather:

Temp:

What I planted:

What I harvested:

Problems noticed:

Pests noticed:

What worked:

What didn't work:

What I will change:

[< Back to Contents](#)

Track Your Harvest

Counting your harvest shows what is worth growing again. Type or write; be honest about quantity and quality.

DATE	VEGETABLE	QUANTITY	QUALITY	NOTES

How to rate quality (keep it simple):

Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor - plus one word on flavour or texture.

Season total:

10 Common Beginner Vegetable Gardening Mistakes

1 Choosing the wrong location

A shady, low, or far corner makes everything harder. Fix: pick the sunniest spot you can reach daily with water.

6 Planting at the wrong time

Tender crops hate frost; cool crops bolt in heat. Fix: build your calendar from local frost dates.

2 Ignoring sunlight

Guessing light leads to leggy plants. Fix: track direct sun for a day or two before placing beds.

7 Ignoring soil preparation

Hard, hungry soil limits everything. Fix: loosen, add mature compost, and mulch a little each season.

3 Planting too closely

Crowding invites disease and small harvests. Fix: follow spacing ranges and thin seedlings bravely.

8 Starting too much at once

Twenty crops overwhelm a beginner. Fix: master 4-6 favourites first, then expand next season.

4 Overwatering

Constantly soggy soil starves roots of air. Fix: check 2-3 cm down first; water deeply, then let the top dry.

9 Forgetting plant support

Tomatoes and climbers sprawl without help. Fix: install trellises or stakes at planting time.

5 Underwatering

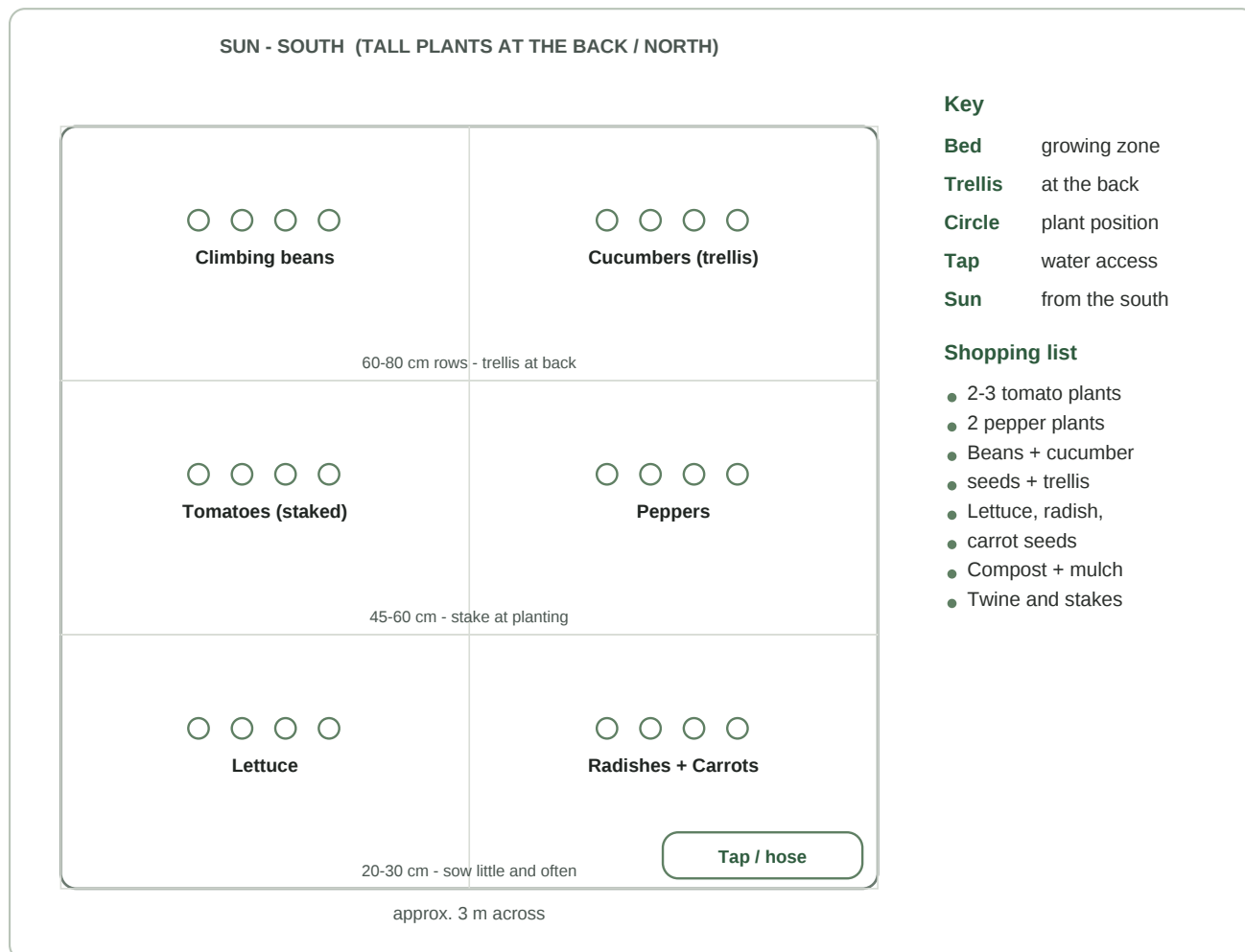
Light sprinkles wet only the surface. Fix: water the root zone slowly until moisture runs several cm deep.

10 Not monitoring regularly

Pests are easy early, hard late. Fix: walk your garden twice a week with the weekly checklist.

A Simple Beginner Garden

A 2 x 3 m bed (or two smaller beds with a path) is plenty for a first season. Six easy crops, with paths, sun, and water marked.



Why this works: tall climbers at the back never shade short crops; paths keep every plant within reach; six crops are enough to learn from.

Adapt spacing to your varieties; leave 60 cm+ paths.

YOUR FIRST MONTH - ONE WEEK AT A TIME

Your First 30 Days

Do a little each week and momentum builds. Tick boxes as you go.



Week 1 - Choose and measure

- Walk the garden morning, midday, evening
- Measure space and sun hours (see Measure page)
- Note water source and hose distance
- Sketch a rough layout in pencil



Week 2 - Choose and gather

- Shortlist 4-6 vegetables you like to eat
- Check spacing needs for each choice
- Look up frost dates; draft calendar
- Gather seeds, compost, pots, labels, twine



Week 3 - Prepare and plant

- Prepare beds or containers; water the soil
- Sow only what is in season for your area
- Label everything with variety + date
- Mulch bare soil; water gently after planting



Week 4 - Tend and record

- Check moisture before watering; log it
- Walk beds twice; weed, inspect, harvest
- Write one journal entry per visit
- Celebrate sprouts; plan next sowing

Adjust timing to your climate - cold regions may sow indoors first in Week 3.

Crop Failure Diagnostic

Do not quit at the first yellow leaf. Most setbacks trace back to sunlight, water, crowding, or timing. Find your symptom below, check the simple causes first, and take one gentle step at a time.

SYMPTOM	CHECK FIRST	GENTLE NEXT STEP
Yellow leaves, mainly lower	Soil too wet? Drainage? Light too low?	Let top 2-3 cm dry; ease off water. Confirm 6+ hrs sun for fruiters.
Holes in leaves	Undersides at dawn/dusk. New or old damage?	Hand-pick; add fleece barrier. Tolerate some damage - plants cope.
Wilting in daytime	Dry root zone? Heatwave? Recent transplant?	Water root zone deeply in morning. Mulch; shade new transplants.
No flowers / fruit	Enough sun? Too crowded? Right season?	Record sun hours; thin to spacing. Wait for season; feed lightly if needed.
Tall, pale seedlings	Light too weak or far? Too warm indoors?	Move to brightest spot; 12-14 hrs light. Gentle airflow; pot on if leggy.
Spots, powder, or mould	Wet leaves? Poor airflow? Crowded?	Water soil, not leaves; space plants. Remove worst leaves to bin.
Seeds never emerge	Sown too deep? Too cold, dry, or old?	Re-sow at packet depth; keep moist. Check dates; test old seed.

This is general guidance, not a laboratory diagnosis. If problems spread fast, contact your local extension service. Never eat plants you cannot identify with certainty.

[Weekly Checklist >](#)

Harvest Maturity Guide

A tracker means little without knowing when a vegetable is ready. Taste and texture beat calendar dates. Check your variety's packet, then use these classic signs.

VEGETABLE	SIGNS IT MAY BE READY	HOW TO PICK
Tomatoes	Full variety colour; slight give.	Twist gently; pick often.
Cucumbers	Firm, even green; before yellowing.	Cut stem; do not pull vine.
Zucchini	15-20 cm; tender skin.	Cut often; big ones seed fast.
Beans (green)	Snap crisp; seeds not bulging.	Pick every 2-3 days.
Peas	Pods plump; taste one first.	Hold vine; pick with other hand.
Carrots	Shoulders show; taste one.	Loosen soil; pull gently.
Radishes	Roots 1-2 cm; harvest promptly.	Pull; re-sow for succession.
Lettuce	Outer leaves usable; hearts firm.	Cut outer leaves or whole head.
Spinach / Chard	Outer leaves 8-15 cm.	Cut outer; centre keeps growing.
Peppers	Firm, full size; colour per type.	Cut stem with scissors.
Beets	Roots 2-5 cm; or pick greens.	Lift carefully; twist tops off.
Potatoes	New: after flowers. Main: tops yellow.	Fork gently; cure before storing.
Onions	Tops fall and dry naturally.	Lift; dry in airy shade.
Herbs	Morning; bushy growth.	Snip tips; never take more than a third.

Sizes and days vary by cultivar and weather - your seed packet and taste buds decide.

[Harvest Tracker >](#)

Garden Budget & Shopping List

Start small on purpose. List what you need, compare two local shops, and let the totals calculate themselves in a PDF reader (or add by hand when printed).

ITEM	QTY	UNIT PRICE	LINE TOTAL	WHERE TO BUY
Seeds				
Seedling trays + mix				
Bagged compost				
Mulch				
Stakes / trellis + twine				
Watering can / hose fitting				
Hand tools				
Plant labels				

ESTIMATED TOTAL:

auto-calculates
in Adobe Reader

Save first: reuse containers, share seed packets, and make compost - the cheapest input.
Prices vary widely by store and season; treat every figure as an estimate.

Safety First + A Short Disclaimer

Gardening is gentle exercise with real tools, sun, and soil. A few habits keep it safe and enjoyable for everyone, including children and pets.

**Wear gloves and wash up.**

Gloves protect against blisters, thorns, and soil irritation. Wash hands - and all produce - before eating.

**Use tools with care.**

Keep blades sharp and pointed away from the body. Store tools out of the reach of children. Never leave a rake face-up on a path.

**Respect sun and heat.**

Work mornings or evenings in hot weather. Drink water, wear a hat, and take shade breaks. Stop if you feel dizzy.

**Go easy with chemicals.**

Read every label fully. Keep fertilisers and pest products locked away from children and pets. Prefer mechanical and cultural controls first.

**Never eat what you cannot identify.**

Only eat crops you planted and can identify with certainty. If foraging or unsure, ask a local expert first - when in doubt, throw it out.

**Know your local rules.**

Composting, watering restrictions, chickens, fires, and structures all vary by municipality. Check local guidance before you build or burn.

General information only

This guide shares generally accepted gardening practice. It is not professional, medical, or legal advice. Adapt everything to your climate, growing zone, and local regulations.

PREMIUM - PRINT AND STICK ON THE FRIDGE

Fridge Quick Reference

One page, everything that matters. Print this single sheet and keep it where you will see it daily.

cut here - fridge sheet below

SUN RULE

Fruiters: 6-8+ hrs direct sun.

Leafy + roots: 4-6 hrs can work.

Watch the plot morning to evening.

My sun hours:

SPACING SHORTCUTS

Small (radish, carrot): 2-8 cm.

Medium (lettuce, beet): 20-30 cm.

Large (tomato, zucchini): 45-90 cm.

Packet always wins over memory.

WATER RULE

Finger-test 2-3 cm first.

Water roots deeply, morning best.

Mulch; skip after good rain.

WEEKLY 5-MINUTE LOOP

1 Moisture 2 New growth 3 Pests

4 Weeds 5 Pick what is ripe

Write one journal line.

MY FROST DATES + SOS

Last spring frost:

First autumn frost:

SOS: yellow? check water first - holes? look under leaves - wilt? soak roots - no fruit? check sun.

Paliurus.com - full help inside this kit

YOU HAVE A PLAN - NOW KEEP GROWING

Keep Growing With Paliurus

You have measured, sketched, chosen, and planned - the hardest part is behind you. Keep observing, keep recording, and let each season teach the next one.

GET MORE PRACTICAL VEGETABLE GARDENING GUIDES

Explore at [Paliurus.com](https://paliurus.com):

- o Vegetable gardening guides
- o Soil and compost resources
- o Beginner gardening articles
- o Vegetable growing guides - Garden planning resources

VISIT

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KEEP GROWING WITH PALIURUS

*New gardening guides, practical tips, and useful resources
to help you grow with confidence.*

Free for personal use. Guidance is general - adapt to your local climate and zone.