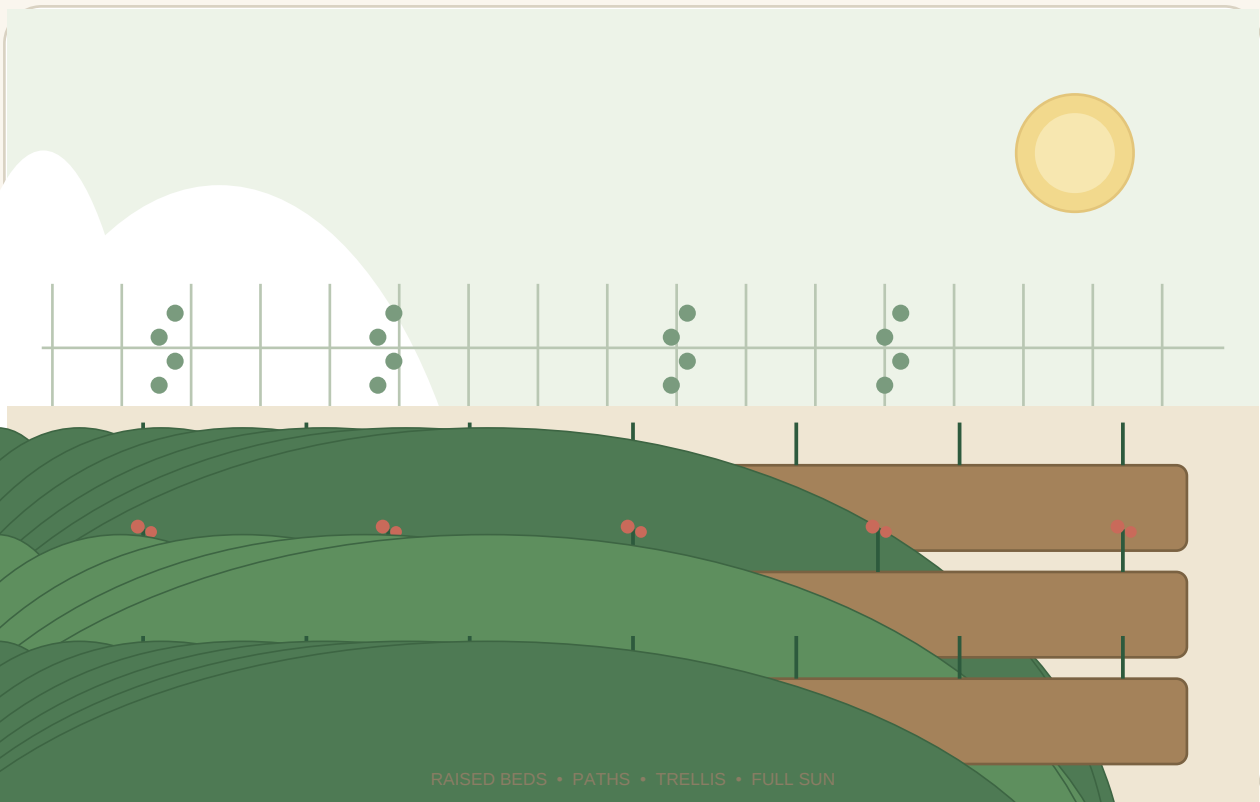


FREE PRINTABLE GUIDE • BEGINNER FRIENDLY

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.



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

FREE RESOURCE FROM
Paliurus.com

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.

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 pages 3–9 in order, then plant with confidence.

Measure Your Garden

Four things shape almost every decision in a vegetable garden: sunlight, available space, soil, and water access. Measure once, write it down, and every later choice — what to grow, where to plant, how to water — becomes easier.



SUN

6–8+ hrs is ideal
for most veg.



SPACE

Length × width.
Note paths too.



SOIL

Texture, drainage
& past use.



WATER

Hose distance
matters daily.

My garden — fill this in

Use a tape measure. Estimates are fine to start.

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

Garden length:

Garden width:

Available growing area: beds + containers (length × width for each)

Hours of direct sunlight (tick one):

☐

Less than 4

☐

4–6

☐

6–8

☐

8+

Water source (tick):

☐

Hose

☐

Rain barrel

☐

Watering can

☐

Other

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

Visit the spot morning, midday, and evening — shade moves more than you expect.

Design Your Garden Layout

Sketch your garden before planting. Leave enough room to reach plants, water them, weed, and harvest. A simple pencil sketch now prevents crowded beds later.

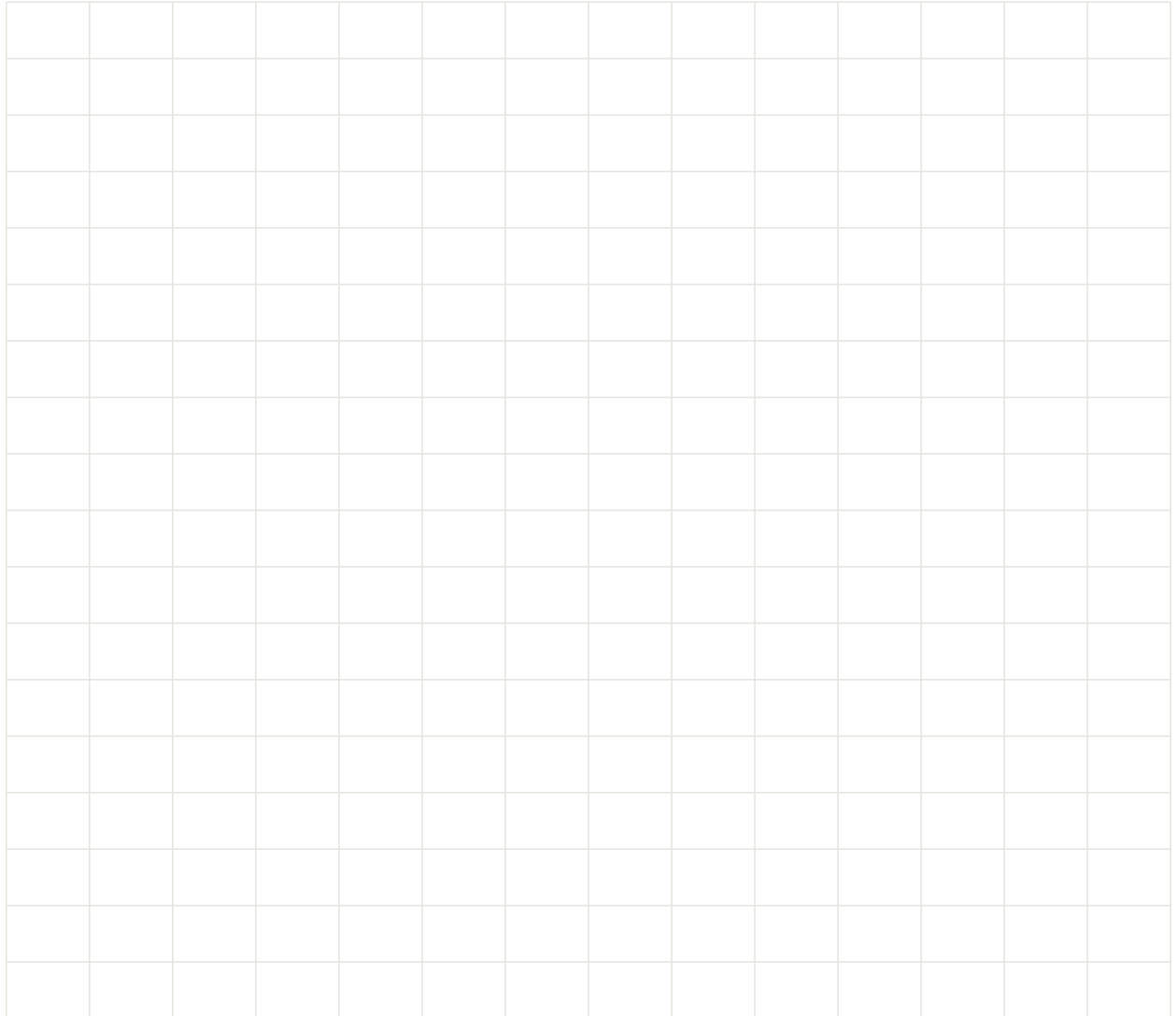
— Bed

-- Path

■ Container

Trellis

≈ Water



Mark on your sketch:

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

Leave room to work

Keep beds ≤ 120 cm wide so you can reach the middle from a path. Place 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 the boxes below, then shortlist 4–6 crops for your first season. Starting small is a strength, not a compromise.

VEGETABLE	I LIKE IT	EASY TO GROW	WANT TO 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 for this season: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

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 (beds, rows, or containers).

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 or variety-specific recommendations — spacing can vary by cultivar and growing method.

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 you decide what goes where.



FULL SUN
6–8+ hours
of direct sun

Tomatoes, peppers,
cucumbers, beans



PARTIAL SUN
About 4–6 hours
of direct sun

Lettuce, spinach,
beets, carrots



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 IN THIS GROUP
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, but check variety & climate	Broccoli • Cabbage • Onions • Herbs (basil loves sun; parsley & mint cope with less)

Note: actual needs vary by crop, variety, and climate. In very hot regions, some "full-sun" crops appreciate afternoon shade and extra water.

Simple Companion Planting Guide

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

MAIN CROP	COMMONLY PAIRED BY GARDENERS	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 these pairings as a starting point, observe your own 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. There is no single worldwide calendar. Use this blank table with your local frost dates and seed packets to build your own.

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 crops in pencil — you will refine dates every season. • [paliurus.com](#)

Seed Starting Checklist

Starting seeds indoors or in a sheltered spot gives tender crops a head start. Work down this list each time you sow, and keep one card per variety so you can compare results.

- ☐ **Choose seeds**
Pick varieties suited to your season length and space.
- ☐ **Check expiration / viability**
Old seed germinates poorly. Check the date on the packet.
- ☐ **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 right after germination prevents legginess.
- ☐ **Monitor germination**
Check daily; note dates to learn what is normal for you.
- ☐ **Thin seedlings if necessary**
Keep the strongest; snip extras at soil level.
- ☐ **Harden seedlings before transplanting**
Introduce outdoor sun and wind gradually over 7–10 days.

My sowing record

Photocopy this card for each variety.

Seed variety:

Date planted:

Expected germination:

Weekly Watering Tracker

Plants prefer deep, thoughtful watering over a rigid daily sprinkle. Check the soil first, note rainfall, then water the root zone. Use this 4-week sheet and patterns will emerge.



Check soil moisture first
finger-test 2–3 cm down



Water deeply when needed
roots, not just leaves



Mind weather &
rainfall

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

Avoid relying only on a fixed schedule — heat, wind, soil type, and mulch change everything.

When in doubt, check the soil. Key: ✓ watered • R rain • — skipped

My Weekly Garden Checklist

Ten minutes, twice a week, prevents most big problems. Walk every bed with fresh eyes, tick what you checked, and jot one line about what you noticed.

- ☐ **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, early morning is best.
- ☐ **Check leaves for disease symptoms**
Spots, yellowing, or wilting? Note which plant, where.
- ☐ **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, cucumbers, and zucchini producing.
- ☐ **Remove damaged plant material**
Clear broken or diseased leaves to the bin, not the compost*.
- ☐ **Record observations**
One sentence in your journal beats a perfect memory.
- ☐ **Plan next week's tasks**
Sowings, transplants, feeding — write the top three.

Notes for this week — Week of: _____

**If unsure whether material is diseased, dispose of it rather than composting at home.*

Garden Journal

STEP 1: PLAN • GROW • HARVEST • PESTS • PROBLEMS • TEMPERATURE • WEATHER • SOIL • SEASON

The journal is where experience compounds. A few honest lines each visit teach you more than any book — what worked here, in your soil, in your weather.

Date: _____ **Weather:** _____ **Temp:** _____

What I planted:

What I harvested:

Problems noticed:

Pests noticed:

What worked:

What didn't work:

What I will change:

Tip: photocopy this page — one sheet per visit keeps the habit light. • Paliurus.com

Track Your Harvest

Weighing or counting your harvest feels satisfying — and it shows you what is worth growing again. Record quantity and quality honestly; even a small harvest teaches a lot.

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 (add up at the end): _____

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 (page 9).

2 Ignoring sunlight

Guessing light leads to leggy plants. Fix: track direct sun for a day or two before placing beds (see page 7).

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 on page 6 and thin seedlings bravely.

8 Starting too many vegetables 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, cucumbers, and beans sprawl without help. Fix: install trellises or stakes at planting time.

5 Underwatering

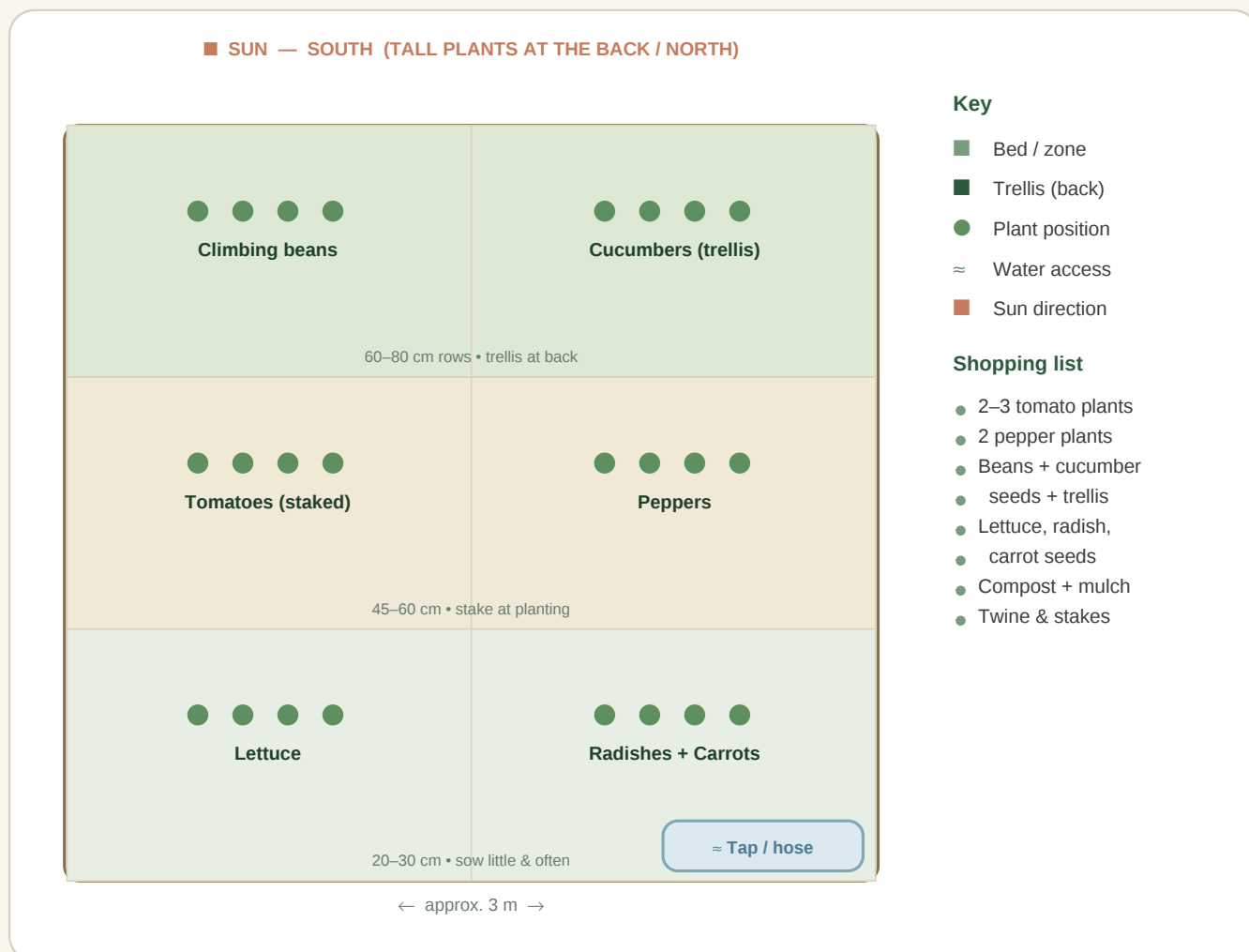
Light sprinkles wet only the surface. Fix: water the root zone slowly until moisture reaches several centimetres deep.

10 Not monitoring plants regularly

Pests and stress are easy early, hard late. Fix: walk your garden twice a week with the checklist on page 12.

A Simple Beginner Garden

A 2 × 3 m bed (or two smaller beds with a path) is plenty for a first season. Below is a reproducible example using six easy crops, with paths, sun direction, and water access marked.



Why this works: tall climbers at the back never shade short crops; paths on two sides keep every plant within reach; and six crops are enough to learn — but not too much to manage.

Adapt spacing to your varieties and leave 60 cm+ paths for a wheelbarrow or watering can.

Your First 30 Days

Do a little each week and momentum builds on its own. Tick boxes as you go — crossed-off tasks are surprisingly motivating.

WEEK

1

Choose & measure

- ☐ Walk the garden at morning, midday, and evening
- ☐ Measure length, width, and hours of direct sun (p. 3)
- ☐ Note water source and hose distance
- ☐ Sketch a rough layout in pencil (p. 4)

WEEK

2

Choose & gather

- ☐ Shortlist 4–6 vegetables you like to eat (p. 5)
- ☐ Check spacing needs for each choice (p. 6)
- ☐ Look up local frost dates; draft calendar (p. 9)
- ☐ Gather seeds, compost, pots, labels, and twine

WEEK

3

Prepare & plant

- ☐ Prepare beds or containers; level and water the soil
- ☐ Start or sow only what is in season for your area
- ☐ Label everything with variety + date (p. 10)
- ☐ Mulch bare soil and water gently after planting

WEEK

4

Tend & record

- ☐ Check soil moisture before watering; log it (p. 11)
- ☐ Walk beds twice; weed, inspect, harvest (p. 12)
- ☐ Write one journal entry per visit (p. 13)
- ☐ Celebrate sprouts — then plan next month's sowing

Adjust timing to your climate — in cold regions Week 3 may mean sowing indoors first.



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.

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