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Family Vegetable Garden Series: Use Winter Months to Plan Ahead (#5, 6 and 8)

Michigan State University

Cooperative Extension Service

Nancy E. Smith and J. Lee Taylor

Department of Horticulture

October 1976

6 pages

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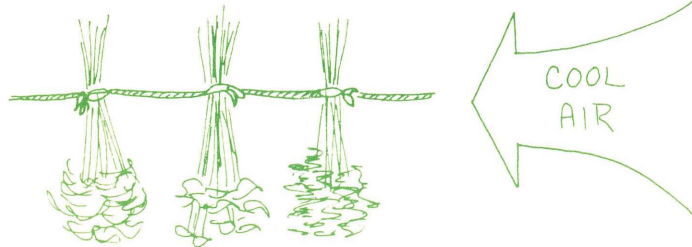
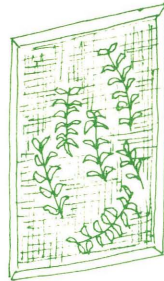
**Scroll down to view the publication.**



## PRESERVING HERBS

Most herbs are preserved by drying. To dry herbs, tie loosely in small bunches and hang upside down in an airy, dust-free room, or spread the herbs loosely on a screen or cheese cloth. Be sure the room is cool. Do not apply heat or let sunlight hit plants or some flavor will be lost. When leaves have dried enough to become brittle, crush the leaves and flowers and place in tightly covered glass jars and store in a dark location to keep the leaves from fading. Label each jar.

Sprigs of most herbs can also be frozen. Chives are usually chopped before freezing. Blanching may help retain flavor.



- Start with only a few kinds
- Grow in full sunlight
- Pick at the right time
- Use sparingly

Other bulletins in this series provide additional information on vegetable gardening.

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
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## family Vegetable Garden series

EXTENSION BULLETIN E-824(5)

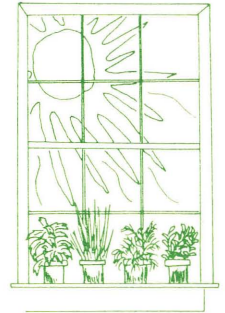
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# Herbs

by Lowell E. Spotts, Genesee Co. Ext. Hort. Agent  
and J. Lee Taylor, Dept. of Horticulture

**HERBS** are truly a cook's "Secret Weapon." They give foods a better flavor, dress up the simplest dishes, and can be used to decorate the home indoors and outdoors. They require little space and can be easily grown in an apartment-sized plot, among flowers, as part of the vegetable garden, or in pots and containers in a window.

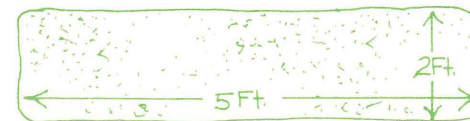
Herbs are needed only in small amounts to flavor foods. Three to four plants of most herbs provide enough seasoning for the average family until the next season. Herbs may be annual, biennial, or perennial as indicated in the herb chart (inside).



## WHERE TO GROW

Indoors in a window with lots of sun or bright light; in well-drained soil that does not hold water in large amounts.

Outdoors in full sunlight or sometimes semi-shaded areas. Be sure soil is well-drained. Grow herbs near the house so they are close-by for easy care and harvesting. A 10-foot square area is enough. Most herbs will grow well even in poor soil.





## PROPAGATING HERBS

Herbs are commonly propagated by seeds, layering, cuttings, and division. Follow directions on packets when propagating by seeds. Many herbs reseed themselves, so once they become established, they may persist for a long time even though they are annuals (chives and dill for example).

## HARVESTING

Cut leaves as needed after plants have grown enough to have a good number of leaves. Harvest herbs like rosemary and thyme by cutting the tops at full bloom. Harvest basil, sage, and marjoram before the flowers open up.



## HOW TO CARE FOR

Care for an herb garden just as you would a vegetable or flower garden. Remember, choose a sunny location with well-drained soil.

Fertilizers are not usually needed except on herbs which are cut many times such as chives or parsley. Too much fertilizer can hurt flavor.

Mints may spread fast, especially in moist soil. Grow them in containers sunk in the soil to keep them from getting weedy.



## HERB HARVEST CHART

HERB	HEIGHT (Inches)	SPACING BETWEEN:		USE
		Rows (Inches)	Plants (Inches)	
<b>ANNUAL HERBS</b>				
Anise	24	18	10	Clip leaves when plants start to flower.
Basil, Sweet	20-24	18	12	Cut 6" above ground.
Borage	24	18	12	Harvest young leaves when in flower.
Coriander	36	24	18	Cut stalks when seeds are ripe.
Dill	24-36	24	12	Pick whole stems and hang upside down to dry.
Fennel, Sweet	60	18	18	Harvest leaves when plants start to flower.
Summer Savory	18	18	18	Harvest young shoots when plant starts to flower.
<b>BIENNIAL HERBS</b>				
Caraway	12-24	18	10	Cut seed heads before dry.
Parsley	6	18	6	Cut as needed or dry in oven.
<b>PERENNIAL HERBS</b>				
Chives	12	12	12	Cut leaves as needed for fresh use. Can also be frozen.
Garlic	30	12	8	Harvest bulbs after leaves have dried down.
Lavender	24	18	18	Harvest flower spikes when in full bloom.
Lemon Balm	24	24	12	Cut tips.
Oregano	24	18	9	Use leaves fresh or dried.
Peppermint	18	24	9	Harvest young sprigs and leaves until plant starts to flower.
Rosemary	36	18	12	Cut leaves just before flowering.
Sage	18	24	12	Cut young tips; dry.
Spearmint	18	24	9	Same as for peppermint.
Sweet Marjoram	12	18	12	Use fresh or dried leaves.
Tarragon	24	24	24	Harvest leaves anytime (best time is when plant starts to flower).
Thyme	8-12	18	12	Cut shoots when first flowers open.

\*This is just a partial list of herbs, others are discussed in various books & bulletins.



BASIL



DILL



CHIVES



GARLIC



SAGE



PARSLEY





WATER IN  
MID-SUMMER  
FOR THIRSTY  
PLANTS



Early plantings of beans (before May 10 in southern Michigan and May 20 for northern Michigan) are risky because of possible frost damage or seed rot. However, if you want very early beans, plant only a few the first planting. Replant if lost.

### WATER ... IF AVAILABLE

If beans show signs of wilting in mid-summer, watering will be profitable, but only if you have a supply of low cost water (your own well).

### HARVEST ... FOR TENDERNESS

Pick snap beans when pods are fully formed, but before seeds start to bulge the pod. Can, freeze or eat soon after harvest as quality is quickly lost. Do so within 24 hours if possible.

Pick horticultural (shell) beans when they are almost full grown and just as pods begin to dry up or change color.

### DISEASE & INSECTS

Disease and insects seldom harm beans. Should a problem arise, take an infected plant to your county office of the Cooperative Extension Service.



KEYS  
TO  
SUCCESS

- **Grow more than one variety**
- **Plant more than once**
- **Harvest at the right time**
- **Use or preserve soon after harvest**

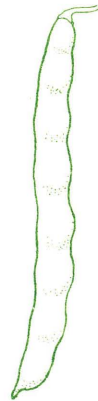
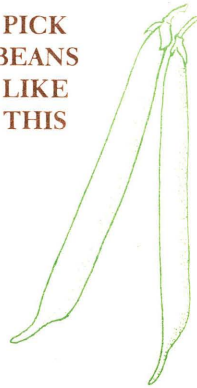
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PICK  
BEANS  
LIKE  
THIS



NOT  
LIKE  
THIS

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family  
Vegetable  
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EXTENSION BULLETIN E-824(6)

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## Garden Beans

by Raymond E. Vasold, Saginaw Co. CED, and  
James E. Motes, Dept. of Horticulture

### WHY BEANS?

Beans are easy-to-grow, high yielding and a good source of protein and vitamins. Make small plantings (10 to 20 feet of row) every two weeks in June and early July to provide beans all summer and early fall.

### VARIETIES

One or more of the following varieties are available through seed catalogs and garden stores. Numbers in ( ) indicate approximate number of days to harvest from seeding.

#### Bush Yellow

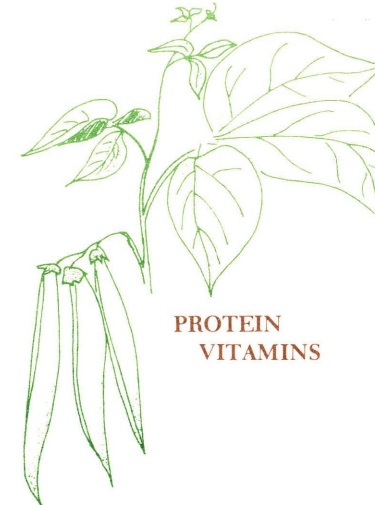
Cherokee Wax (52)  
Eastern Butterwax (53)  
Goldcrop (54)  
Kinghorn Special (54)

#### Bush Green

Provider (50)  
Spartan Arrow (51)  
Bush Romano (52)  
Contender (53)  
Tendercrop (53)  
Tenderette (53)  
Improved Tendergreen (56)  
Bush Blue Lake (58)

#### Pole

Blue Lake (60)  
Romano (64)  
Kentucky Wonder (65)



PROTEIN  
VITAMINS

GREEN BEANS



#### Horticultural (Shell Beans)

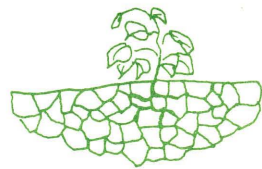
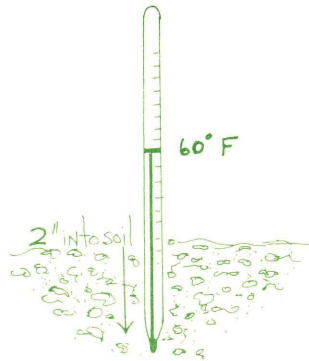
French Horticultural (68)

## GOOD SOIL . . . FOR BETTER BEANS

The right soil is very important. Beans will not do well on very acid soil. Ask your Cooperative Extension Agent if a soil test is necessary.

A well-drained, loose soil is ideal for beans. Sticky clay soils need compost or well rotted manure added if available. See bulletin No. 2 "Soils" for more ideas on soil preparation.

Unless soil is sandy or light, do not plant early in the spring. Beans must be planted in a sunny place. Beans are a warm temperature crop and will not do well until the soil temperature reaches 60°F (usually in late May). Any thermometer can be used to get temperature. Place bulb 2 inches into soil for temperature reading.



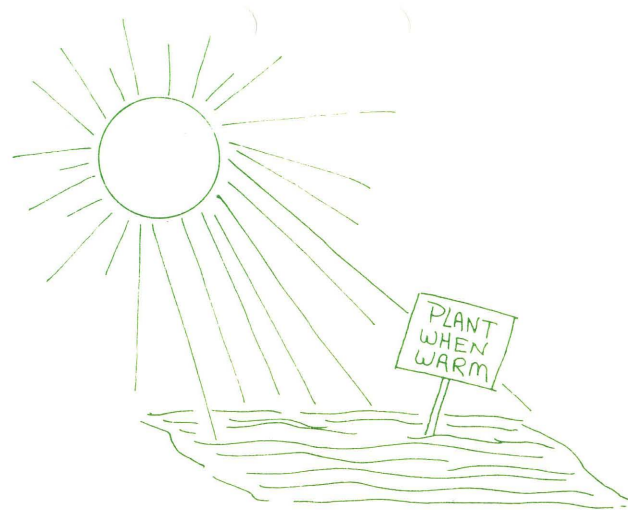
TIGHT SOIL  
NO AIR OR WATER



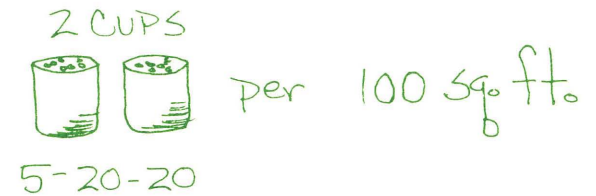
LOOSE SOIL  
AIR AND WATER

## FERTILIZER . . . . THE PLANT'S FOOD

Well rotted manure (if available), rotted leaves, compost, garden refuse, or other similar materials are good for your garden. Spread them evenly and plow or spade into the soil.

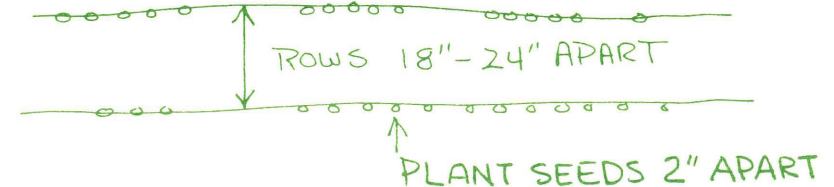


. . . Mix one pound (2 cups) of 5-20-20 fertilizer into the soil when spading or rototilling for each 100 sq. ft. (length × width in feet give number of square feet). Add another 2 cups evenly on the soil surface and work in with a garden rake before seeding.



## SEEDING BUSH BEANS

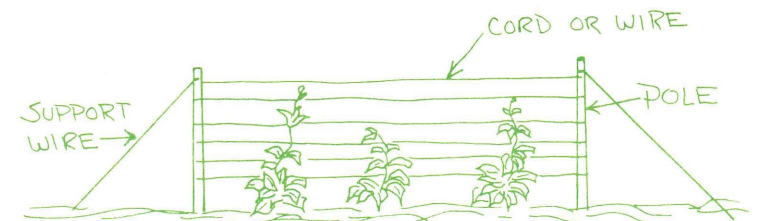
Plant in rows 18 to 24 inches apart. Place seeds 2 in. apart in the rows. Plant seeds 1 to 1½ in. deep in early plantings and 1½ to 2 in. deep in later plantings. Growing different colors and types of beans will give more of a variety to choose from because of their different looks and tastes.



## SEEDING POLE BEANS

For pole beans, place 3 to 4 seeds at the base of poles placed 3 feet apart. Poles can be of any material about 5 ft. long and set about one ft. into the ground.

Pole beans are desirable for small gardens because they require less space by using a pole or trellis. To make a trellis, set a sturdy pole at each end of a 10 ft. row. Use cord or wire between the poles.

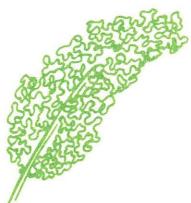




Greens should be washed in cool running water to remove sand or soil. Shake them to remove excess water. Greens can be stored in a tightly covered container for one or two days in the refrigerator. But the sooner you use them, the better they are.



The trick to serving good, nutritious greens is to cook them quickly in as little water as possible, or use a steamer. Often the moisture that clings to the leaves after washing is all you need for cooking. Add ½ teaspoon of salt to the water for each pound of greens. Cook leafy greens about 1 to 3 minutes—just until they wilt.



**Season with:** Allspice, Crisp, crumbled bacon and bacon drippings, Salt pork, Butter, Lemon, Onion, Nutmeg, Vinegar, Cheese sauce, Sesame oil.



- Plant at the right time
- Make successive plantings of beets, turnips, mustard and spinach
- Use greens when fresh

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EXTENSION BULLETIN E-824 (B)

# GREENS

by Roberta Lawrence, Ext. Hort. Agt., Washtenaw Co.,  
and J. Lee Taylor, Dept. of Horticulture

**GREENS** are special vegetables because you can use them in so many ways. Eat them raw in salads or sandwiches. Cook greens and serve as hot vegetable side dishes. Season your favorite soup with greens, or use them in an omelet or souffle!

As a special plus, greens are loaded with vitamins A and C, and minerals, such as calcium and iron.



## Recommended Varieties

### SWISS CHARD

Rhubarb  
Fordhook Giant

### BEETS

Ruby Queen  
Detroit Dark Red

### MUSTARD

Green Wave  
Tendergreen

### COLLARDS

Vates

### KALE

Dwarf Blue Curled  
Vates

### TURNIPS

Tokyo Cross  
Seven Top

### SPINACH

America  
Viking



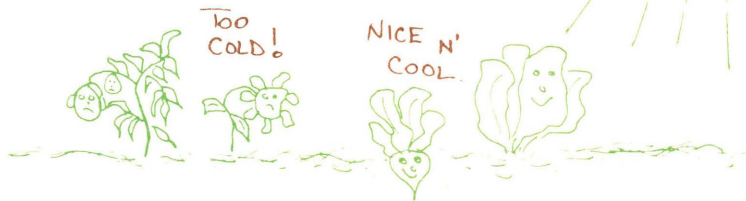




Greens are like salad crops in many ways. In fact, many greens are grown just for salads. (See No. 10 in this series: Salad Stuff.)

Greens don't have to grow in straight rows in a big garden plot. They grow just as well and look nice in flower beds, as borders along walkways and even in flower pots or window boxes.

Greens grow best in cool weather, so in early spring or in fall, when it's too cold for many plants—GREENS GROW GREAT!



Long rows of beets, turnips, mustard and spinach should *not* be planted all at once, or you will have more greens than you can eat at one time. Begin in early spring and plant about a four-foot row of each. Then every two weeks until May, plant another short row. This is called **SUCCESSIVE PLANTING**, a practice that will assure you a continuous supply of tender, fresh greens.



Collards, kale and chard can be planted all at once in the early spring, or in late July for a fall crop. As they grow, cut off and use the outer leaves and new leaves will keep growing in the centers of the plants. You'll be able to harvest for a long time from a few plants.

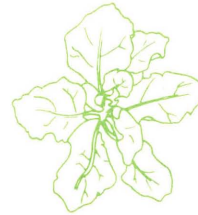
### Turnip Tops and Beet Tops

For tops only, grow these close together in rows or scattered in a corner of a flower bed or garden. If you want to grow big roots too, plant the rows about 18 inches apart. When plants are small, thin them so the beets are three inches apart and the turnips four to six inches apart. (See No. 7 in this series: Root Crops.) In addition to the usual ways of using greens stir-fry turnip tops in sesame oil for a crisp vegetable in oriental dishes. Use them by themselves or in a combination meat dish.



### Kale and Collards—*The Cabbage Kids!*

Kale likes it KOLD! It does best as a fall crop, and its flavor is improved by light frosts. In contrast, collards like hot weather and are one of the few greens that do well all summer long. For both kale and collards, set out transplants in the early spring. For a fall crop, plant seeds in mid July. Scatter the seeds close together; then thin plants to 8 inches apart in rows 18 inches apart. The little plants you thin out are really good to eat.



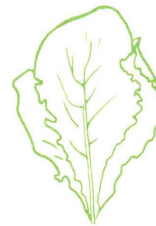
### Chard (Swiss)

Chard is really a foliage beet, with foliage that varies from pale green to ruby red in color. It will grow all summer if you keep cutting the outer leaves. (See page 2.) The stalks and thick ribs of the leaves are a lot like celery. Cook the stalks separately, just as you would celery. Try rolling the leaves with a ground meat filling and bake with your favorite mushroom or tomato sauce.



### Mustard Greens

Mustard grows fast—just 30 to 40 days from planting until picking. For the best flavor, harvest the leaves before they are fully grown. Mustard goes to seed when the days get warm and long, so plant it very early in the spring, or in August for a fall crop. The curly mustard varieties withstand frosts well and can be harvested late in the fall. Try mustard greens in a tasty Italian omelet or lightly sauteed in butter or bacon drippings.



### Spinach

Spinach is a little hard to grow. It goes to seed even faster than mustard when the weather gets warm. In hot weather, substitute chard in recipes that call for spinach. How about a spinach pie, creamed spinach, spinach soup or a cheesy spinach soufflé? Spinach is certainly one of the most versatile greens.

