

Crop Rotation Checklist

By Tara Schatz

- Make a list of all the vegetables you would like to plant in your garden. Divide them up into families. Here's a list of the most common vegetable families.
 - Brassicas (cabbage family).** These include arugula, cabbage, collards, Brussels sprouts, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, bok choy, kohlrabi, rutabaga, turnip, and radishes.
 - Legumes (beans and peas).** This family includes all beans and peas and peanuts.
 - Solanaceae (nightshades).** The nightshades include tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, peppers, and tomatillos.
 - Alliums (onion family).** These include onions, garlic, leeks, shallots, and chives.
 - Umbeliferae (carrots and root crops).** Carrots, parsnips, cilantro, fennel, celery, dill, celeriac, parsley.
 - Chenopodiaceae (beet family).** Swiss chard, spinach, and beets.
 - Cucurbits (cucumber family).** Squash, zucchini, cucumbers, pumpkins, and melons.
 - Miscellaneous.** Corn, lettuce, endive, basil, artichokes, chicory.
- Develop your crop rotation plan.
 - Draw a diagram of your garden, and begin penciling in where you want your plants to go. Create a new diagram each year and keep records of where you plant your crops. Here are some strategies to help with crop placement and rotation.
 - Do not plant a crop of the same family in the same place two years in a row.
 - Plant deep-rooted vegetables where shallow rooted vegetables previously grew.
 - Follow plants that need a lot of fertilizer with plants that need very little. Growing peas and beans in your garden will actually add nitrogen to the soil, so they are a great crop to plant after broccoli, spinach, and the all members of the nightshade family.
 - Plant tall plants like corn, tomatoes, and pole beans on the edge of your garden so they do not end up giving too much shade to sun-loving crops.
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- Amend your soil between plantings with plenty of organic matter. Shredded leaves, compost, and cow manure are great additions to your garden and will work wonders for your soil and your plants.
- If you are left with empty spaces in your garden during the growing season, plant green manures like buckwheat, winter rye, and alfalfa. Chop these plants into your soil before they flower or after they are killed by the frost. They will provide your soil and your garden plants with valuable nutrients.