**Spring Vegetables**

1. Choosing a garden site
   1. Ensure accessibility & convenience to a water source, water is the most basic gardening requirement.
   2. Planting dates: March 15 (spring & summer) and October 15 (winter)
   3. Direct sunlight; ensure there is no shading from nearby structures, buildings, and trees.
      1. Exposure of sun, minimum for warm-season vegetable crops 6-8hrs

* Require long, hot days & warm soils to mature

1. Good drainage, avoid areas where water would collect. Leveled ground easier to garden than sloped ground.
2. Easy accessibility and close to home. More likely to spend more time in the garden, if conveniently located.
3. Establish fences if necessary. Protection against dogs, rabbits, raccoons, and possums.
4. Exposure
   * 1. Spring Veg: Minimum of 6 hours per day
     2. Plant tall plants (ex: corn) on north side of garden to avoid shading short crops
   1. Raised beds vs. surface soil
   2. Raised beds: allow for walking space, establish a permanent site with easy access to tools and irrigation

* Benefits: Topsoil can be brought in if existing soil is poor (be particular to soil quality to avoid importing diseases, weeds & pests), can be placed on paved surfaces, use redwood or cedar wood material, use non-toxic paint, level entire planting area for effective irrigation, *recommended* walkways to be covered with wood chips or mulch to prevent weeds from growing and *recommended* to install a permanent drip-irrigation system or a faucet with irrigation hoses for watering
* Easy to maintain without stepping on loose soil
* Ability to amend soil
* Easier pest control
* Easy access for seniors and physically challenged individuals
* Easy to cover if needed to protect from pests, frost, or summer intensity.
* Allow for early- and later- planting because soils warms quicker in the spring and stays warmer in the fall

-     Details:

Bed depth at least 12 inches or up to 3 feet tall, width no more than about 4 feet (greater depth allows for greater variety of crops to grow, example: tomatoes)

1. Surface soil: prepare soil, add amendments and nutrients
2. Add a 50/50 mix of soil and compost

* Benefits: Ensure 6-8 hours of direct sunlight per day, select a leveled area with well-drained soil. Size of garden is dependent upon available spacing, time, and needs of you and your family.

1. Timing
   1. What to plant now during spring in Southern California's Valleys: basil, beans, beets, carrots, corn, cucumber, eggplant, peas, peppers, radish, spinach, strawberries, squash, sunflower, tomatoes, thyme (see attachment).
      1. Tomatoes: indeterminate vs. determinate

1. Organic vs. Synthetic Gardening

* 17 elements essential to plant growth & development, 14 of them are derived from soil
* The health of plants depends largely on healthy soils!
  + 1. Macronutrients: nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium (all 3 are soil solids)
  + Nitrogen: promotes healthy leaves and stems; gives rich green color
  + Phosphorus: promotes flower/fruit growth, good stems and roots
  + Potassium: promotes flower/fruit growth, stems and roots, and overall plant health

1. Stress signals from plants: too much/too little water, infected soils by diseases (fungus and/or bacteria), nutritional status, nutrient deficiency, toxicity or imbalance
2. Fertilizing:
   * 1. Organics: (manures and composts; organic forms)
     2. Synthetics: (inorganic forms)

1. Direct-Seeding & Transplanting

a. Purchase seeds and transplants from a trusted nursery

* 1. Direct- seeding
     + - Smaller the seed, shallower the depth (3-4 times the size of the seed), cover with soil rich material (such as compost), water gently but thoroughly
       - When using seed packets, check expiration date. Also, read directions on spacing, depth, sun/water requirements and days of harvest
  2. Transplanting
     + 1. Best done late afternoon, remove plants from containers carefully keeping soil and roots together as possible. Grab from the root ball not from the stems of transplants (turn containers upside down and loosen sides of container for easier removal). Make a hole that is twice as large as the root ball of transplant, place plant into the hole, fill hole with soil (mix of soil and compost), gently press it down together. Provide deep watering; do not water again until the soil has dried a bit.

1. Harvesting

* Up to your preference, sample throughout fruit development and decide for yourself!
* Fruiting vegetables (tomatoes, squash & beans) should be picked throughout their season
* Leafy crops harvest before they send a tall stalk in center of plant (has gone to seed/bolted), don’t wait until they flower
* Want to harvest before plant bolts, as soon as it bolts the chemistry of the plant changes and will no longer be edible.

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| **Vegetables** | **Dates** | **Season** |
| Basil | April-June | Spring |
| Beans, Lima | April-June | Spring |
| Beans, Snap | April-June | Spring |
| Beets | April-June | Spring |
| Cantaloupes and other melons | April-June | Spring |
| Carrots | April-June | Spring |
| Cauliflower | April-June | Spring |
| Corn, Sweet corn | April-June | Spring |
| Cucumbers | April-June | Spring |
| Eggplant | April-June | Spring |
| Peppers | April-June | Spring |
| Potatoes | April-June | Spring |
| Pumpkins | April-June | Spring |
| Radishes | April-June | Spring |
| Squash | April-June | Spring |
| Sunflower | April-June | Spring |
| Thyme | April-June | Spring |
| Tomatoes | April-June | Spring |
| Turnips | April-June | Spring |
| Watermelons | April-June | Spring |