

# The Square Foot Garden

- Easy Layouts for the space-challenged gardener

*Intensive plantings, more food, less maintenance*



Square foot gardening is a simple method of creating small, orderly, and highly productive kitchen gardens.

The basic concept is to create a small garden bed (4 feet by 4 feet or 4 feet by 8 feet are common sizes) and divide it into a grid of 1-foot squares, which you manage individually. This was the very first serious vegetable gardening method I ever tried, and it worked out beautifully. Before this, I grew my entire garden using black plastic, in rows. I stopped doing that when I realized that living in an area with prolific populations of snakes in the heat of summer was not the best place to grow a garden covered in plastic sheets.

Seeds or seedlings of each kind of vegetable are planted in one or more squares, at a density based on plant size (e.g., you'd plant about 16 radish seeds per square, but you would plant only one tomato plant). Since there are no paths, there is no wasted space, and the soil in the bed stays loose because you never step on it.

Your square foot garden can be as rustic or as formal as you like. It will look clean, tidy and organized, and you can plant flowering plants within or around it, or add decorative trellises in the squares for vining veggies. Growing Nasturtiums and Marigolds around the gardens will repel damaging insects. Leave the wood unstained or unpainted, and make sure you aren't using pressure treated wood or stains that are not food safe. Cedar planters are nice, and you can stain or paint them to weatherproof for winter. I use a food safe cedar finish. If you use paint, be sure it is exterior grade, and food grade. If you are just painting the outside of the planters, you can use normal exterior paint. All surfaces that touch the soil or plants must be painted or stained with food safe paints and stains.



**High yields:** Intensive planting means you'll harvest a lot from a small space, so it's ideal for gardeners with limited garden space.

**Fast set-up:** Square foot gardening is a quick way to start a new garden, so it's great for beginners. You can place your raised bed anywhere - even over grass or pavement - allowing you to build, fill, and start planting in a just few hours. You only need to prepare the planting areas, not the paths, so it takes a lot less time and effort.

**Minimal regular maintenance:** Since the garden is small, and you have only a few specific tasks to do on any given day, you only need to spend a few minutes planting, maintaining, and harvesting at any time.

**Less weeding:** If you build a square foot garden filled with soilless mix and compost, you won't have weeds to pull for the first season. Weeds will become more common over time as seeds blow or fall into the bed. One advantage of densely planted crops is that they can form a living mulch and can also prevent weeds from establishing or even germinating. Also, natural insect repellent methods such as companion planting (e.g. planting marigolds or other naturally pest-repelling plants) become more efficient in a close space, which may reduce the need to use pesticides. The large variety of crops in a small space also prevents plant diseases from spreading easily.

**More Frequent Watering:** All plants in planters need more frequent watering than those in the ground. You will save money on water because you are watering a spot, not an entire landscape. You can run drip soaker hoses for even more conservation and savings.

Raised bed gardens, or elevated beds (on legs) are best. If building your own, make your beds at least 12 inches deep, if planting above ground. If planting your raised beds over soil, lay down landscape fabric to block weeds, and make the beds at least 8 inches deep, and the plants will find their way to the soil and grow deeper. Elevated raised beds make weeds and destructive garden pests (rabbits, etc.) almost non-existent. The raised beds on legs are perfect for those who cannot or do not wish to bend or dig. The prefab raised beds are available with the square foot sections already marked out and separated by pieces of wood, so it's easy for beginners and those who wish a quick set-up.



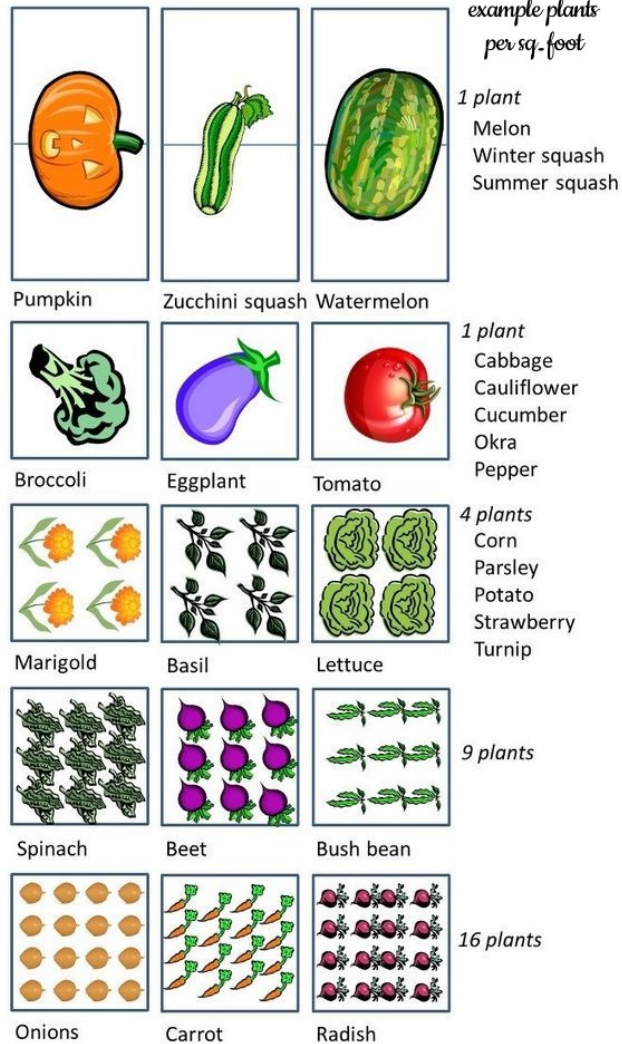
This beginner layout is perfect for someone with minimal time or space to garden. Choose what you love to eat. I grow mostly my plant clone transplants and seedlings, and not from seed. I like my plants to have a good head start. Sowing seed is easy in a square foot garden, and so is thinning out. I just prefer a harder start to my gardens. Naturally, any melons, peas, cucumbers and squash I grow are grown from seed.

To graduate to a larger square foot garden, using the planting guide below, and multiply your squares. If you make multiples, be sure to leave a path between sections of squares for working the garden and for harvesting. Leave room for working and navigating the garden. Or just lengthen the size of the garden and don't add squares for width.











































## A Beginner's Veggie Garden

Each square represents one square foot.

### Square Foot Gardening Layout



### How Many of These Veggies can i grow in one square of a square foot garden?

 Tomatoes 1	 Peppers 1	 Onion 9	 Head Lettuce 4	 Carrots 6	 Leaf Lettuce 16	 Cucumber 2
 Hot Pepper 1	 Winter Squash 1	 Sweet Potatoes 1	 Potatoes 2	 Pumpkins 1	 Cauliflower 1	 Corn 2
 Beets 9	 Eggplant 1	 Spinach 9	 Garlic 4	 Radishes 16	 Melons 1	 Celery 2
 Brussel Sprouts 1	 Kale 2	 Summer Squash 1	 Rosemary 1	 Cilantro 9	 Sage 1	 Chives 1
 Bush Beans 4	 Pole Beans 4	 Basil 2	 Bok Choy 1	 Parsnips 9	 Dill 9	 Oregano 1
 Cabbage 1	 Turnips 9	 Parsley 2	 Thyme 2	 Rutabagas 4	 Peas 8	 Okra 1

\*Numbers represent the number of plantings per square foot


Once you've tried these easy layouts and successfully harvested your first crops, you are ready to tackle any size or type of square foot garden.





You now know which veggies you planted too close or where you had room to plant more plants. You also learned what variety of plant might have been too large for its square.

You can create an entire herb, culinary and medicinal garden using this method, as well.

**Popular veggies in the garden shown on the chart below. It shows you how many plants to plant per square foot of your favorite veggies..**


# A Handy Guide To Square Foot Planting

				
Plant	one	four	nine	sixteen
asparagus				
basil (large)				
basil (small)				
beets (large)				
beets (small)				
bok choy				
broccoli				
cabbage				
carrots				
cauliflower				
celery				
chives				
cilantro				
collard greens				
corn				
cucumbers				
dill				
drying beans				
eggplant				
fava beans				
fennel				
garlic				
ginger				
green beans (bush)				
green onions				
gourds				
head lettuce				
kale				
kohlrabi				
leaf lettuce				
leeks				
lima beans				
marigolds				
mustard greens				
nasturtiums				
okra				
onions (medium)				
onions (storage)				
oregano				

				
Plant	one	four	nine	sixteen
parsnips				
parsley				
peas, garden				
peas, sugar				
peppers				
potatoes				
radishes				
rosemary				
rutabagas				
sage				
savory				
soybeans				
spinach				
strawberries				
sunflowers				
sweet potatoes				
swiss chard				
thyme				
tomatoes				
turnips				

## Squash and Melons

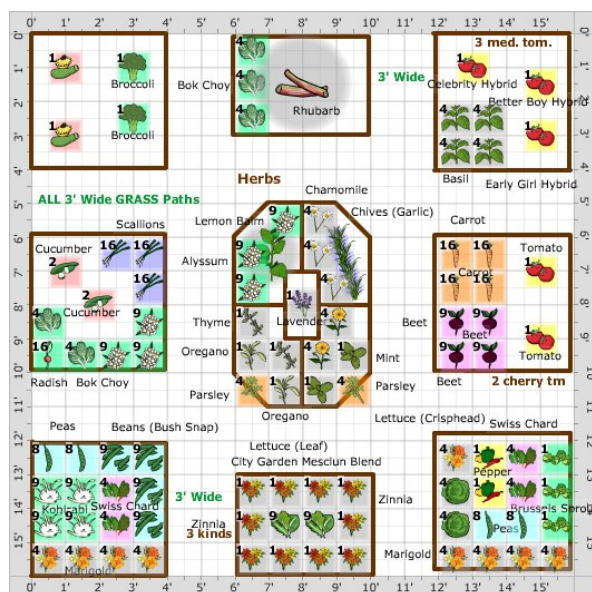
These plants need room to spread out. Plant one per square foot, with a shared trellis or cage for every two plants (or two squares), to keep them from invading other squares.

 <p>two plants in two square feet with a shared trellis or cage</p>
cantaloupe
pumpkins
summer squash
watermelon
winter squash
zucchini










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Below you will find a garden design layout for an approximately 16x16 square foot food and herb garden, big enough for a family. You can eliminate the flowers and herbs, and grow more veggies. I would skip the flowers, except for marigolds, which repels insects.

Feel free to choose the varieties of plants that you would love to eat, rather than the suggested plant varieties.



Plant	Number	Spacing	Spacing in Rows
Alyssum	54	5"	5" x 5"
Basil	16	7"	5" x 9"
Beans (Bush Snap)	36	9"	5" x 1' 1"
Beet	36	5"	3" x 7"
Bok Choy	20	7"	7" x 9"
Broccoli	2	1' 5"	1' 5" x 1' 5"
Brussels Sprouts	3	1' 11"	1' 11" x 1' 11"
Carrot	64	3"	3" x 5"
Chamomile	12	11"	9" x 1' 3"
Garlic Chives	4	5"	5" x 7"
Cucumber	4	1' 11"	1' 11" x 1' 11"
Flower	8	7"	5" x 7"
Kohlrabi	36	9"	7" x 11"
Lavender	1	1' 3"	1' 1" x 1' 7"
Lemon Balm	1	1' 11"	1' 11" x 1' 11"
Lettuce (Crisphead or Butterhead)	8	9"	7" x 11"
Lettuce (Leaf)	9	3"	3" x 5"
Lettuce (Leaf) <i>Mesclun Blend</i>	9	3"	3" x 5"
Marigold	36	7"	7" x 7"
Mint	2	7"	5" x 9"
Oregano	2	7"	5" x 9"
Parsley	8	5"	3" x 9"
Peas	32	3"	3" x 7"
Pepper	2	1' 1"	11" x 1' 3"
Radish	16	3"	3" x 7"
Rhubarb	1	2' 11"	2' 11" x 2' 11"

	Scallions	48	3"	3" x 3"
	Squash (Summer)	2	1' 11"	1' 11" x 1' 11"
	Swiss Chard	16	1' 1"	11" x 1' 3"
	Thyme	2	11"	11" x 1' 3"
	Tomato (Small) <i>Celebrity Hybrid</i>	1	1' 7"	1' 5" x 1' 11"
	Tomato (Small) <i>Early Girl Hybrid</i>	1	1' 7"	1' 5" x 1' 11"
	Tomato (Cherry)	2	1' 7"	1' 5" x 1' 11"
	Tomato (Small) <i>Better Boy Hybrid</i>	1	1' 7"	1' 5" x 1' 11"
	Zinnia	10	11"	11" x 11"

sources  
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 Old Farmer's Almanac  
 Wikipedia  
 GrowVeg  
 Commonsense Home  
 Good Housekeeping  
 pinterest  
 Printable garden charts

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