

Garden Size and Borders

Start small: It's better to succeed with a small garden at first than to fail because you didn't have time to tend a large garden that you weren't ready for. That's not to say, if you know what you are capable of that you can't start a large garden right away. Just know the challenge.

I recommend 4-5 foot wide beds in increments of 8, 10 or 20 feet long. You can reach across to center, and its easy to irrigate and cover with hoop houses later on. Try to install them with the long side of the bed aligned with north and south

The size of the garden is dependent on a few things. Your time commitment is the first priority. Most gardeners are directed to start small, and I would tend to agree, but there are certain situations where starting a little bigger is also recommended. Lets say you have a situation where you are going to surround the garden plot with a fence and some permanent landscaping. If you start small you may fence in a shape that ends up being too small for your needs in a couple years. In a case like this, you might think about where the permanent border would go, start with that, but only cultivate the number of beds in that area that you have time for, while leaving the other untended beds sheet mulched and improve the soil until you can add them to your schedule. You will also want to keep in mind that it's nice to have some space around the garden to use for compost piles, worm bins, storage, or maybe a chicken coop down the road.

Once you get the size figured out, that knowledge, mixed with a list of what food you want to grow will tell you how much seed to order based on how much room you have to grow those crops. Lets say you have room for three 4X10 beds, that gives you 120 square feet of growing space.

As far as garden location, you want to make sure there's enough solar exposure; at least 6 hours of sun per day, the more the better in general. Look for obstructions that may shade the garden during spring and fall.

Other things to consider for the garden location:

- Near water spigot
- Close to house
- Plan for expansion
- Flat is best with good drainage

Go ahead and mark the bed off with string and a few stakes or sticks to visualize where it would go.

Fencing is an important thing to consider. A few deer can reek havoc on a garden pretty fast if not fenced out. The same goes for dogs, rabbits and other rodents.



If you have dogs, a 3-4 foot barrier fence is usually enough, possibly higher if you have bigger dogs that are good jumpers.

Rabbits require three feet of chicken wire with a foot buried.

Deer: I use a psychological deer fence: (see video)

Plan for expansion. Don't fence yourself in

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