



My
**GARDEN
PLANNER**

[HOME FOR THE HARVEST.COM](http://HOMEFOR THE HARVEST.COM)

Garden Planner

INTRODUCTION

It's time to plan your garden! This garden planner will help you prepare for your annual vegetable, herb, and/or flower garden. It's a wholistic guide that leads you step-by-step through the process of planning a successful garden.

The planner includes a section for each basic step of garden planning. Each section also includes a corresponding companion article on the Home for the Harvest website. These articles provide detailed background information for each step:

Garden Planning Articles: www.homefortheharvest.com/garden-planner

CONTENTS

Set Your Garden Goals	1
Find Your Garden Mentor	2
Discover Your Growing Zone	2
Pick Your Type of Garden	3
Choose Crops You'll Love	4
Determine the Right Number of Plants	5
Draw Your Garden Map	8
Create Your Garden Schedule	10

Name: _____

Location: _____

Year: _____

PS: See my gardening tool picks and gift ideas for gardeners on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/shop/homefortheharvest/>

STEP 1: SET YOUR GARDEN GOALS

The first step in planning your garden is to set your goal for the year. Write your gardening goal by considering both the reason you'd like to start a garden, as well as the action you plan to take. The *reason* portion of your goal explains WHY you would like to have a garden, while the *action* portion explains HOW you will reach this goal.

Get specific with your reason and with what success looks like for you. Your goal will guide your decisions as you work through the following steps.

Examples:

- My goal is to increase our family's food security by creating our own edible garden from which we can eat fresh vegetables every day throughout the growing season.
- My goal is to adopt a healthier diet by having immediate, backyard access to the freshest vegetables possible for my morning smoothies and evening salads.
- My goal is to create a relaxing yet productive retreat area in my yard by building an ornamental kitchen garden that features beautiful salad greens and edible flowers.

Now it's your turn. Fill in your gardening goal here:

My goal is to (*reason*)

by (*action*)

STEP 2: FIND YOUR GARDEN MENTOR

Find a garden mentor who can directly support you with your gardening goal. For instance, if your goal includes growing enough tomatoes to make a year's worth of salsa, make sure you find an expert who has direct experience growing tomatoes.

If you're looking for online mentorship, the Organic Gardening Community group on Facebook is full of experienced gardeners who can help you with your gardening questions any day, any time.

Fill in your gardening mentor(s) information here:

Local Mentor(s): _____

Contact Information: _____

Online Mentor(s): _____

Contact Information: _____

STEP 3: DISCOVER YOUR GROWING ZONE

Record your Plant Hardiness Zone and local frost dates in this section. Your data reference source may be a Plant Hardiness Map, government historical climate data, your gardening mentor, or another reputable source.

Plant Hardiness Zone: _____

Last Spring Frost Date: _____

First Fall Frost Date: _____

Data Source(s): _____

STEP 4: PICK YOUR TYPE OF GARDEN

What type or types of garden will you be using this season?

Select the type(s) of garden you'll be using this year:

Flat-Earth Garden

Raised Bed Garden

Container Garden



For Flat-Earth Gardens, Raised Beds, and Large Containers:

Record the available dimensions of your garden (length, width):

Calculate the total square feet of growing space available. Write the amount down:

For Small Container Gardens:

Count up the number of containers you have or plan to have, as well as notes on the dimensions/sizes of the containers. Write the amount(s) down:

STEP 5: CHOOSE YOUR CROPS

Choose 5-10 crops to grow this season. Focus on your garden goal when selecting your crops. You can buy the items you don't grow yourself at a local Farmers Market. The list below will be your seed shopping list ([see recommended seed companies](#)).

Also note your desired characteristics for each crop. Make notes about whether you'd like an heirloom variety, preferences for small or large vegetables, or other special requirements such as cold hardiness.

Fill in the crops you've chosen in the table below to create a seed shopping list.

Table: Seed Shopping List

CROP	DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER OF PLANTS <i>(Fill in During Step 6)</i>

STEP 6: DEFINE YOUR NUMBER OF PLANTS

Consider how many plants you'll require to meet your garden goal from Step 1. The size of your garden will limit the amount of produce you can grow.

Once you have an idea how many plants you'd like, you'll need to determine how much space you'll need to grow these plants. This guide includes tables for two methods of calculating required garden area based on number of plants. Choose one method and fill out the corresponding table (see the next two pages).

The first method, [Square-Foot Gardening](#), is a well-known organic gardening system that specifies spacing for each common edible plant. This is the easiest method. If you aren't using Square-Foot Gardening, the required area can be estimated based on the spacing shown on each seed packet. If you don't want to calculate the area, and would just like to estimate, that's ok too. Square-Foot Gardening and seed packet instructions are a guideline, not a rule. Feel free to experiment!

Once you've estimated your required area, come back to this page and compare your estimated total area required with your total available garden space from Step 4.

Total area required: _____

Total area available: _____

If the required area doesn't match the available space, make adjustments to your number of plants or number of crops until the required area fits your garden space. If you don't want to reduce the number of plants or crops, make arrangements for a bigger garden, or look into alternatives such as a community garden plot.

Also go back and update the Seed Shopping List in Step 5, filling in the last column of the table. You're now ready to go shopping for your seeds!

Garden Planner

Square-Foot Gardening Method:

If using the [Square-Foot Gardening Method](#), simply consult the “At-A-Glance” table in the Square-Foot Gardening book to find the spacing for each crop. In the table, the column “Spacing per square foot” shows how many plants will fit in each square foot.

For instance, lettuce has a spacing of 4 plants per square foot. Therefore, if you wanted 20 lettuce plants, specify 5 square feet of “area required” to ensure enough lettuce.

Table: Square-Foot Gardening Area Required

CROP	DESIRED NUMBER OF PLANTS	PLANTS PER SQUARE FOOT	AREA REQUIRED <i>(square feet)</i>

TOTAL AREA REQUIRED:

Garden Planner

Seed Packet Spacing Method:

This method uses the packet/catalog seed and row spacings, along with your desired length of row (refer to your dimensions), to estimate the area required for each crop:

Number of Plants x Seed Spacing = Inches of Row Required

Inches of Row Required / 12 = Row Feet Required

Row Feet Required / Length of Rows = Number of Rows

Number of Rows x Row Spacing x Length of Row = Area Required

Table: Seed Packet Spacing Estimated Area Required

CROP	DESIRED NUMBER OF PLANTS	SEED SPACING	AREA REQUIRED <i>(square feet)</i>

TOTAL AREA REQUIRED:



STEP 7: DRAW YOUR GARDEN MAP

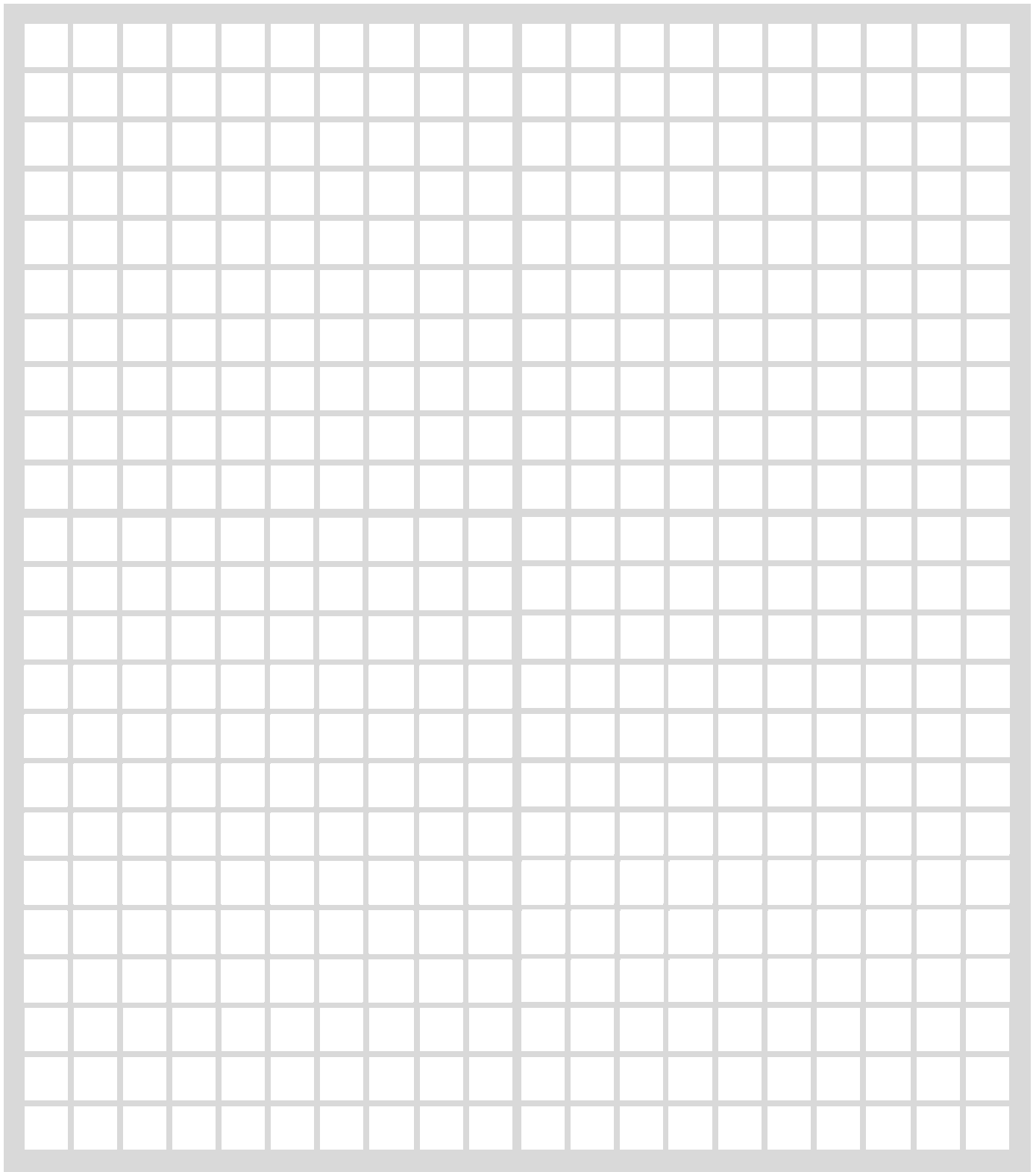
Create a plan view layout map of your garden:

- Set a reasonable scale for the map grid on the next page (record your scale below).
- Create a legend by assigning a colour to each crop (pencil crayons work best).
- Draw a North arrow on or beside the map grid on the next page.
- Draw the perimeter of your garden on the map grid (or sketch in containers).
- Pencil in sunny areas and shady areas, as well as the general path of the sun.
- Make note of the wind direction and the water drainage direction.
- Read the seed packet for each crop to learn the preferred environmental conditions.
- Choose where each crop will go based on the preferences of each plant.
- For each crop, label and draw in the required area, lightly colouring in the extents.
- Draw rows or dots for each plant you intend to grow.

Scale:

Legend:

Garden Planner



STEP 8: CREATE YOUR GARDEN SCHEDULE

Creating your garden schedule is the final step in planning your garden. You'll be filling in the scheduling table on the following pages with details for when to plant each crop, as well as the estimated harvest date based on seed packet instructions. There are also areas in the table to allow for notes during the gardening season. For instance, if a crop matures earlier than planned, use the notes area to record this information for reference when you plan your next garden.

Each column of the scheduling table should be filled in with one crop. Write the type of crop in the top box, and then fill in the details about the crop in the boxes below the crop name. Before filling out the table however, put your seeds in order.

If you've purchased your seed packets already, arrange them on a flat surface in chronological order of the planting date. Once the seeds are in order according to their initial seed planting date, write down the name and details for each crop in the table on the next page, in chronological order.

In general, you have to calculate the seed planting dates yourself using the Last Spring Frost (as recorded in Step 3). Some seed companies, however, do provide seed planting charts for local areas so that you don't have to calculate these dates. If you have not yet purchased your seeds, consult the catalog or website for your seed supplier to get the seed planting date information.

For crops you'll be starting indoors (called seed-starting), list the indoor seed planting date in the "indoor seed planting date" row. Then list the date you'll transplant these seedlings into the garden in the "outdoor planting date" row. For crops that will be direct-seeded into garden soil, skip the indoor planting date box and use only the "outdoor planting date" row. Note that when you're putting the seeds in chronological order, use the dates that the seeds will be first planted (either indoors or outdoors), rather than a transplant date.

Garden Planner

CROP					
VARIETY					
SEED VENDOR					
INDOOR SEED PLANTING DATE					
OUTDOOR PLANTING DATE					
ESTIMATED HARVEST DATE					
YIELD					
NOTES					

Garden Planner

CROP					
VARIETY					
SEED VENDOR					
INDOOR SEED PLANTING DATE					
OUTDOOR PLANTING DATE					
ESTIMATED HARVEST DATE					
YIELD					
NOTES					