

Gardening 101

Planning: Location - level, sunny area with well-drained soil.

- Full sunlight (6-8 hrs per day. Full sun is ideal for all vegetables, but root and leafy crops can tolerate some shade.
- Adequate water supply
- In-ground, raised beds, containers. Almost any vegetable can grow in container as long as the pot is big enough. Raised beds are frequently desirable, even though a great deal of material may be used in construction. Water absorbs better in raised beds. You control the soil better. Raised beds should be no more than 4' wide for ease of planting and care, but they can also be as narrow as 12" if there is limited space.
- Square foot gardening.
- No-till gardening if planting in-ground. Work soil 6-10 inches deep, but avoid bringing subsoil to the surface
- Plant what you will eat.

Soil Prep:

- Conejo Valley has mostly heavy clay soil, but clay has many trace elements not found in other soils, so it's not all bad.
- Very light or very heavy soils can be modified to increase their water-holding capacity or to improve drainage
- Light sandy soils are generally low in organic matter and water holding capacity. Add large amounts of organic matter, such as compost or well-rotted manure. Retail steer manure is high in salt, so if you need to buy manure, make it chicken manure.
- Adding organic matter helps make heavy soil more crumbly, improving water infiltration and root penetration.

Watering: will vary according to your soil, what you planted, and weather conditions.

- Water should be applied when the top 1-2 inches of the soil have dried out. Most vegetables need 1-2" of water per week.

Mulch: a layer around plants helps conserve soil moisture and reduces frequency of irrigation. Mulch also discourages growth of weeds. Do not put mulch up around the stems of plants. Make a little moat around each plant.

Zones: Our gardening zone is zone 10b and our climate is Mediterranean. **The “zones” are determined by the average minimum temperatures in an area and are organized by the USDA Plant Hardiness map.** For instance, our minimum temperature gets in the range of 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit—that is the coldest we get on average at any point in the year.

Fertilization:

Nitrogen - naturally low in CA soils

Potassium - usually not needed

Phosphorus - low in highly weathered soils

Iron - deficient when acid-loving plants are grown in alkaline soils

What is compost? Naturally decaying organic material

Reduces waste, created soil conditioner, conserves water

WHAT TO PLANT WHEN IT'S 35-65F

Cool Season

JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH

DECEMBER

SMALL + SHORT

arugula, carrots, chives, garlic, lettuce varieties, mustard greens, onions, radishes, spinach

MEDIUM

beets, swiss chard, cilantro, dill, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme, winter savory

LARGE + LENGTHY

broccoli, cauliflower, fava beans, kale, sugar snap peas, snow peas

WHAT TO PLANT WHEN IT'S 65-85F
Warm Season
APRIL | MAY | JUNE
OCTOBER | NOVEMBER

SMALL + SHORT

arugula, chives, garlic, onions, sorrel, zinnias

MEDIUM

basil- *all varieties*, bush beans, marigolds, oregano, peppers, rosemary, sage, swiss chard, thyme

LARGE + LENGTHY

cucumber, eggplants, kale, large peppers, malabar spinach, pole beans, squash, tomatoes, zucchini

WHAT TO PLANT WHEN IT'S 85+F
Hot Season
JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER

SMALL AND SHORT

arugula, chives, arugula, oregano, thyme, zinnia

MEDIUM

basil – *all varieties*, chili peppers, crowder peas, lima beans, rosemary, swiss chard

LARGE AND LENGTHY

armenian cucumber, cardamom, eggplant, ginger, gourds, pole beans, okra, sweet potato, tomatillos, turmeric

Links to Planting Guides:

<https://www.gardenate.com/zones/USA+-+Zone+10b>

<https://homesteadandchill.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Zone-10-Planting-Calendar-Homestead-and-Chill-.pdf>

<https://www.kelloggarden.com/Zone-10-Vegetable-Planting-Chart.pdf>