Name: _____ Date: _____

Planning a Sunny Vegetable Bed

Circle group

Starting a vegetable garden is fun. A little planning helps you grow a big crop instead of sad sprouts. Follow these steps for a small garden bed.

First, pick your spot. Most vegetables need many hours of direct sun each day. Pick a place that is not shaded by buildings or big trees. It also helps to be near water, because you will water often.

Second, get the soil ready. Ask an adult to help you loosen it with a shovel or a garden fork. Then roots can spread. Pull out weeds and rocks. Mix in some compost. Compost adds nutrients that plants will use as they grow.

Third, read the seed packet. It tells you how deep to plant the seeds. It tells you how far apart the plants should be. Spacing matters. Plants that crowd together fight for light, water, and food. None of them grows well.

Fourth, water gently. A soft spray keeps the seeds from washing away. The soil should be damp but not muddy.

Last, spread mulch, such as straw, around the plants. Mulch keeps the soil moist and stops weeds. Check your garden often. Soon you will see tiny green shoots.

Questions

1. What kind of spot should you pick for a vegetable bed?

_____

_____

2. Why should you loosen the soil?

_____

_____

3. What does compost add to the soil?

_____

_____

4. Where can you find out how deep to plant a seed?

_____

_____

5. Why does spacing matter when planting?

_____

_____

6. Why is mulch helpful in a garden?

_____

_____

Words to know

direct: coming straight from the source without anything in the way
loosen: to make less tight or packed
spacing: the room left between things
mulch: a covering of straw or leaves spread over soil

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Planning a Sunny Vegetable Bed

Triangle group

Starting a vegetable garden is fun, but a little planning makes the difference between a bumper crop and a patch of sad sprouts. Follow these steps for a small garden bed.

First, choose your spot. Most vegetables need many hours of direct sunlight every day, so pick a place that is not shaded by buildings or big trees. It also helps to be near a water source, since you will be watering often.

Second, prepare the soil. Ask an adult to help you loosen it with a shovel or garden fork so that roots can spread. Pull out weeds and rocks. Then mix in some compost, which adds nutrients that plants will use as they grow.

Third, read the seed packet. It tells you how deep to plant the seeds and how far apart the plants should be. Spacing matters. If plants crowd together, they compete for light, water, and food, and none of them grows well.

Fourth, water gently. A soft spray keeps the seeds from washing away. The soil should stay damp but not muddy.

Finally, add a layer of mulch, such as straw, around the plants. Mulch keeps the soil moist and blocks weeds. Check your garden often, and soon you will see tiny green shoots pushing through the soil.

Questions

1. What kind of spot should you choose for a vegetable bed?

_____

_____

2. Why should you loosen the soil?

_____

_____

3. What does compost add to the soil?

_____

_____

4. Where can you find out how deep to plant a seed?

_____

_____

5. Why does spacing matter when planting?

_____

_____

6. Why is mulch helpful in a garden?

_____

_____

Words to know

direct: coming straight from the source without anything in the way
loosen: to make less tight or packed
spacing: the room left between things
compete: to try to get the same thing as others
mulch: a covering of straw or leaves spread over soil

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Planning a Sunny Vegetable Bed

Square group

Starting a vegetable garden is enjoyable, but a bit of careful planning makes the difference between an abundant harvest and a patch of feeble sprouts. The following steps will guide you through creating a small garden bed.

First, select your location. Most vegetables require many hours of direct sunlight every day, so choose a place that buildings and large trees do not shade. Proximity to a water source is also valuable, since you will be watering frequently.

Second, prepare the soil. With an adult's assistance, loosen it using a shovel or garden fork so that roots can spread easily. Remove any weeds and rocks, and then blend in some compost, which supplies nutrients that the plants will consume as they grow.

Third, read the seed packet carefully, because it specifies how deep to plant the seeds and how far apart the plants should stand. Spacing matters a great deal. When plants are crowded together, they compete for light, water, and food, and none of them grows well.

Fourth, water gently. A soft spray prevents the seeds from washing away, and the soil should remain damp without becoming muddy.

Finally, spread a layer of mulch, such as straw, around the plants. Mulch retains moisture in the soil and suppresses weeds. Inspect your garden often, and before long you will notice tiny green shoots pushing up through the soil.

Questions

1. What kind of location should you select for a vegetable bed?

_____

_____

2. Why should you loosen the soil?

_____

_____

3. What does compost supply to the soil?

_____

_____

4. Where can you learn how deep to plant a seed?

_____

_____

5. Why does spacing matter a great deal when planting?

_____

_____

6. Why is mulch useful in a garden?

_____

_____

Words to know

direct: coming straight from the source without anything in the way
loosen: to make less tight or packed
spacing: the room left between things
compete: to try to get the same thing as others
mulch: a covering of straw or leaves spread over soil

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Planning a Sunny Vegetable Bed

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Planning a Sunny Vegetable Bed

Easier · 197 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2

1. A sunny place that is not shaded and is near water.
2. So the roots can spread.
3. Nutrients that plants use as they grow.
4. On the seed packet.
5. Crowded plants fight for light, water, and food, so none grows well.
6. It keeps the soil moist and stops weeds.

Triangle: Planning a Sunny Vegetable Bed

This passage · 213 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.7

1. A sunny place that is not shaded and is close to water.
2. So the roots can spread.
3. Nutrients that plants use as they grow.
4. On the seed packet.
5. Crowded plants compete for light, water, and food, so none grows well.
6. It keeps the soil moist and blocks weeds.

Square: Planning a Sunny Vegetable Bed

Harder · 227 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7

1. A sunny place that is not shaded and is close to water.
2. So that roots can spread easily.
3. Nutrients that the plants consume as they grow.
4. On the seed packet.
5. Crowded plants compete for light, water, and food, so none of them grows well.
6. It retains moisture in the soil and suppresses weeds.