

## ***Want to design your own garden?***

Just save and print the grid printable below! Here's how you can get started:

1. Measure your garden bed or think about the size of garden you want.
2. Decide on scale: you can make 1 foot equal to 1, 2, 4, or another number of grid boxes. Just be sure to stick to that scale!
3. Decide on plants - remember, some plants grow in the spring/fall and some plants grow in the summer, so you can use the same space for multiple plants!
4. Write down the mature size of each plant OR the spacing recommended for each type of seed. You can draw any shape for the mature size of the plant so it is easier to visualize what it will look like in the future.
5. Use your scale to determine how large to draw the mature plant in your design.
6. Write down the growing days for each plant - for instance, radishes only need 55 days to mature and grow well in the spring, so you can make a plan to replace radishes with tomatoes, peppers, etc., when they are harvested.
7. In addition to your garden plan sheet, keep a record of when and what you plant. You can make multiple garden plans on this grid paper for different times of the year.
8. The records you keep will help you plan your garden next year!

Other things to consider:

- It is best to keep your soil covered in the winter. Save cardboard boxes, mulch, or even black plastic to cover your garden once everything is harvested. Cover crops are a great alternative!
- Succession planting: if you want more than one harvest for things like lettuce, radishes, beets, and carrots, consider planting more than once. If you plant a row on week 1, wait two weeks before planting another row. This will extend your harvest time for fresh vegetables!
- Companion planting: it is always good practice to plant flowers and herbs with your other crops. Marigolds, basil, dill, and zinnias make great companion plants by attracting pollinators and keeping pests away! Try to make space for them in your garden bed.
- Soil health is **vital** for a healthy garden! After each harvest, try to incorporate compost into your soil. It doesn't have to be a lot - a little bit of organic matter goes a long way!
- Mulch is great for your garden. Using wood mulch helps build up organic matter, regulate soil temperature, and keep weeds out.
- Fruit and vegetables harvested directly from the garden (rather than shipped from another country) hold more nutrients, more flavor, and give you a sense of accomplishment when you can say, "I grew that!"
- Remember - gardening is *fun* for people of all ages! It has been shown that gardening helps with memory retention, feelings of connectedness, release of serotonin (the feel good chemical) in the brain, lowering blood pressure, and let's not forget the tastiest benefit of all - locally grown (VERY locally) food packed with nutrients for you, your family, your neighbors, and community!
- Contact Morgan Bradley if you have any questions.