

Gardening

Succession planting makes garden larger

By Pat Leuchtman
leisure Columnist

My garden has never yet been big enough to suit me. One of the ways I try to get more production out of the space I have is by planning succession plantings.

I've planted a lot of peas this year, oriental snow peas, yellow soup peas and the new sugar snap peas. When they are all harvested there is going to be a big gap in the garden, but it won't be there for long. I already have packets of seeds selected and ready for planting. When the peas come out, in goes swiss chard, beets, carrots, rutabagas and bush beans.

There are a couple of things to take into consideration when planning a second planting. Members of the same plant family should not be planted in succession because they will place a heavy demand on the soil for the same nutrients. For instance, root crops require a large amount of potash while leafy plants like lettuce and cabbage require large amounts of nitrogen.

Since the garden has already brought in one harvest, the compost that has been in preparation will now come in very handy. It can be spread and dug into the soil to insure fertility for the second planting.

As in the spring, I use two methods of planting, direct seeding into the garden and transplanting seedlings that I started early in June.

Though the garden is hot in the summer, even cold loving plants like lettuce and spinach can be started in late July or early August, but you do have to take a little more care than in the early spring. The plus is that weed and insect problems are much less.

I prepare the soil and plant the seeds in the evening, making sure to give them a good soaking. I also put a layer of hay mulch over the newly planted seeds to keep them from drying out too much and also to keep them a little cooler. If I can, I plant them in the shade of taller plants.

Once my flats are emptied of tomatoes, peppers and the first planting of the brassicas (cabbage family), I fill them with fresh soil and replant them with lettuce, squash and the second planting of the brassicas. (This is also the only way I come near to using up all the seeds I ordered in that January flush of enthusiasms). My cold frames are in a very sunny spot, so I usually keep these flats on my porch where they can be in light shade when the weather is hot.

As with the seedlings I set out in the spring, I root prune them about a week before I transplant them, and I will pick a cloudy day, or a cool evening to do the transplanting so the shock will be minimized as much as possible.

Some crops do especially well planted late and will last even after frost. Kale actually isn't its best until after frost. Cabbage and oriental greens will also do well in cold weather, as will spinach.

Considering the cost and quality of supermarket vegetables, I figure the more production I can get out of my always-too-small garden, the better off my family and my budget.

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They haven't hit Heath yet, but Barbara Levy wonders what to do about the flea beetles that are de-

stroying her eggplant and pepper seedlings. Clear cultivation is important and planting those seedlings

in partial shade will discourage the flea beetles as will interplanting with sage and thyme.

But, if they do arrive, they can be controlled with dustings of rotenone every 14 days for as long as necessary. If it rains you can apply rotenone in seven days. This pesticide has a low toxicity for man and animals, but should not be used within one day of harvest. I can see Tina Smith at the Extension Service is not often at a loss for an answer to a question.

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The second book, "FireFacts: The Consumer's Guide to Wood Heat," by Jerry Kipp, comes from another Vermont publisher, The Countryman Press in Taftsville.—A

good looking, thorough guide, written by an expert, it should be extremely useful to anyone who has, or contemplates having, a wood stove.

Kipp discusses wood lot management (tree cutting, tree care, axmanship, wood storage), chain saws (how to buy, handle, use — to fell limb and buck), fireplaces and their maintenance, chimneys and more. A final section is devoted to an illustrated buying guide (fireplace inserts, stoves, furnaces, etc.), an up-to-date product directory that many will certainly find its weight in gold.



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