

Home/Garden

Before you know it, it's time to plant again

The spinach has bolted, my husband has decided he doesn't like arugula, the broccoli plants I set out matured and went to seed before the heads were big enough to harvest and the chard germinated spottily - so it is time to dig up those beds and plant again.

Succession planting is a way to get more production out of limited garden space, to compensate for early losses, to extend the growing season well into the fall, and to feel good about a whole new beginning in the middle of the garden season.

If you are going to plant where you have already had a crop growing, you should prepare the soil. You must feed it to provide enough nutrients to sustain these new plants. I always dig in rotted manure and compost.

Dick Raymond, Garden Way's expert gardener, recommends digging in the residue of the old crop because the green plants are easy for earthworms and other soil microorganisms to break down. He chops the plants and tills them in with a rototiller, but the job can be done by hand.

A couple of days after fertilizing the seed bed, it is ready for planting. Make sure it is smooth and flat. A final raking will help discourage weeds, but I must say I think the mid-summer garden is less susceptible to weeds anyway. Remember to rotate your crops as much as possible. This helps to discourage pest infestation and the proliferation of disease or

Pat
Leuchtman



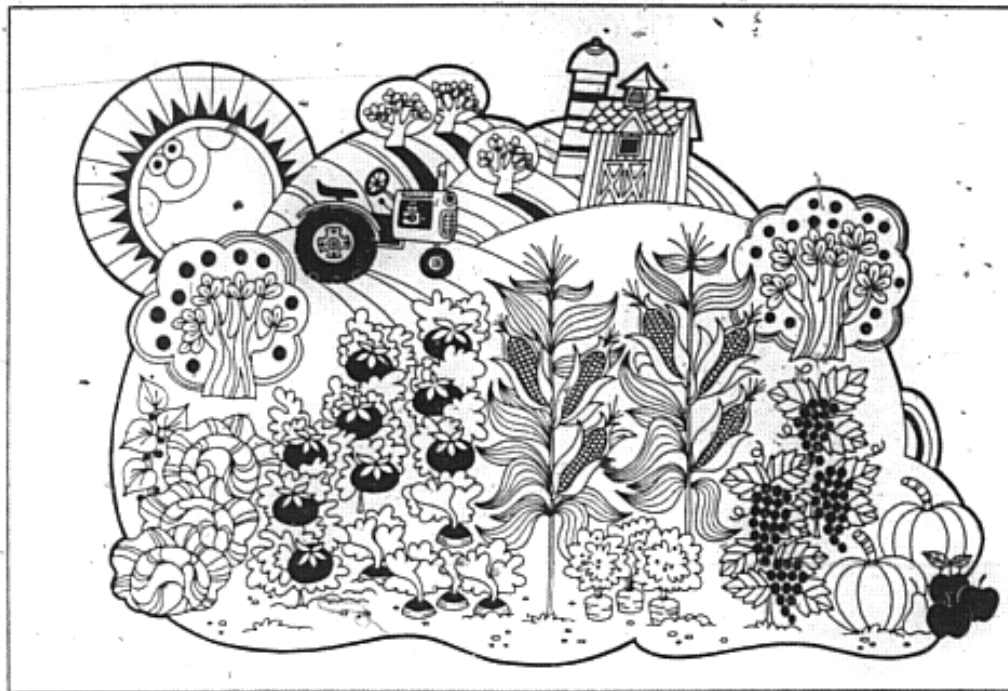
Between
The Rows

fungus.

In addition, different types of crops will demand different nutrients from the soil. Root crops, beets, carrots and turnips, are good choices for a late planting and they can follow the leafy, above-ground crops like spinach, early lettuce or peas.

It's a good idea to cover the seeds with a little extra soil to help keep them from drying out. I also like to scatter grass clipping over the newly planted and watered bed to help keep the soil moist. This year we had either very wet weather, or extremely dry weather and it has become extremely clear to me that one of the major reasons for success in the garden is keeping the seed bed and transplants well watered. If the seed germinates and then isn't watered it will die; transplants will wither and die very quickly as well. Cole crops like broccoli and cauliflower do well in the cool weather.

I plant my seeds in little nursery beds where I can watch them and keep them well watered. When they are big enough, I transplant them



wherever I have room. Kale is famous for its cold hardiness. It can be harvested even in the snow. Collards are also cold tolerant. Both of these greens mature in 60 days so they are perfect for midsummer

planting.

Johnny's Selected Seeds (Albion, ME 04910) offers two types of Chinese cabbage that mature in 60 days and are ideal choices for succession planting. W-R Green and Early Top They

are both disease resistant.

While you are out in the garden preparing a new garden bed for a second planting you might want to think about giving the plants already there a mid-season boost of fertilizer.

If you are going to plant where you have already had a crop growing, you should prepare the soil.

A side dressing of rotted manure or compost will benefit any crop.

At this time of the season I mix up a solution of water and liquid seaweed and spray it on my vegetable crops. This foliar feeding is absorbed by the leaves and gives the plants a shot in the arm - so to speak. Liquid seaweed provides major nutrients and the trace elements that are vital for healthy growth.

It is important to use a foliar fertilizer after the garden has been well watered, because a foliar feeding given to a dry garden will do at least as much damage as any very shallow and insufficient watering.

There is hardly ever a time when you can't seed something in the garden and you will find that late planting has some definite advantages. Root maggots (sometimes called cabbage maggots) which attack radishes, parsnips, rutabagas and turnips are more of a problem in cool, early spring soil. Seed rot is not a problem after the soil has warmed up.

Seize this advantage and plant again.

On the house

Garden calendar