



Crop Rotation Principles

Why do it

- Helps with making a plan on what to plant, where and when.
- Results in a better balance between soil demands and needs.
- Reduces pests and diseases.
- Means you are producing or improving the soil all year round.

Main Principles

- Try to keep to the *general crop outline*.
- If you don't that's fine... *except for the tomato and potato family*- they should not be planted in the same part of the bed for more than one year.
- The *growing year has two parts*- one starts in spring and goes to the end of summer (s-s). Then in the same bed the second part, where there may be autumn and winter (a-w) options. For example in the legume bed, you could plant the purple king bean variety in s-s and in the same bed in a-w try snow peas- both are legumes.
- One way to plan the *rotation* is to start with or number your legume bed in s-s. In the same bed in the following s-s leafy greens can be planted to take advantage of the nitrogen the legumes leave behind. Move what is in the beds one crop type at a time to reflect this direction of movement i.e. legumes then leafy greens.
- In a 4 bed crop rotation it will be *4 years before you grow* the same group of plants in the same space.
- Try not to plant all of the bed out at one time so you can stagger your yield, rest some of the soil, eat the crop for longer and reduce your workload at preserving time! Put the *first plantings in the southern* end of the bed so they won't shade the next planting in front.
- If you do not want to plant an edible crop in the bed, try putting in a *green manure crop* and dig it in just before it flowers. It is a good idea to rest beds to help the soil rejuvenate every now and then. Always mulch.
- Try to *add bee attracting flowers and companion plants* where possible e.g. borage, alyssum, salvia, mints, lavender, basil with tomatoes.
- You will need a *separate part* of the garden for *perennial plants* such as sorrel, comfrey, rhubarb, most herbs and artichokes. Plants that take up a lot of room (such as pumpkins and potatoes) may also need a separate area.
- There are many other crop rotation options e.g. a 6 bed crop rotation system. The sequence could be: corn and cabbages → solanaceae → legumes → leafy greens and brassicas → onions and root crops → green manure.

And next year ??????

- To help learn from your mistakesyes it always happens..... take a record of what bed currently has what type of plant (e.g. legume), what you did to help the soil (maybe some compost, dolomite), the variety (snow pea) and how well they went and would you do the same next year in the next successive bed.

Enjoy gardening