

One-Day Edible “Peak” Garden

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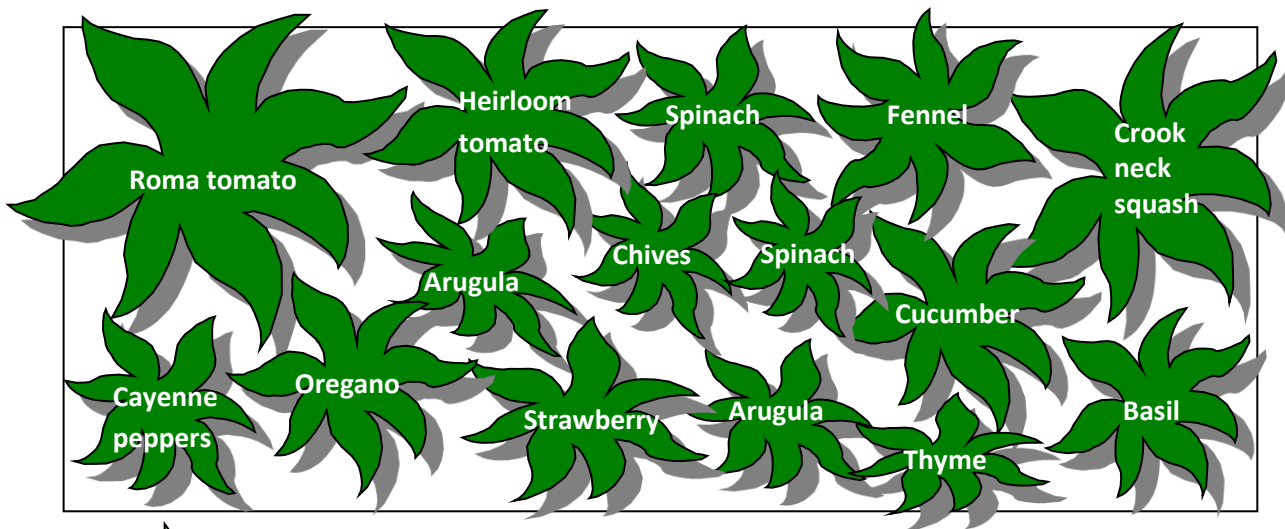
If you’ve got a four-by-eight foot plot, or four to eight planters or pots, you can make this edible garden. It’s easy to get started, and might prove easier to do than you think. Enjoy the satisfaction of growing your own food, and with this starter garden, it may inspire you to go bigger. Just follow these steps in April or May (depending on where you live) and you’ll harvest in weeks.

1. **Plan and Shop**
2. **Amend your soil**
3. **Plant and water**
4. **Watch it grow**



9 a.m. → **Plan and shop**

Research the plants and foods you like online, and pre-source your seed or seedling starts from an organic and heirloom shop. Choose a spot in the yard you can reach with your hose and that gets at least 6 hours of sunshine daily. Sketch a plan, taking into account how large everything will be fully grown – don’t jam the plants close together when planting– or follow a layout such as the raised bed below. Then go buy your seedlings and enough bagged organic compost to spread a 6-inch deep layer – to fill an four-by-eight foot space use about 16 cubic feet. Or better yet, compost your household peels and cuttings (fresh only ‘cuz cooked foods have less nutrients).



11 → **Amend your soil**

When you get home water the seedlings thoroughly while they’re still in their containers. Spread organic compost over entire planting bed, or into pots or plots. Mix it in with a digging fork, or your hands, removing big rocks, and rake the area flat - this will help water soak in evenly. Then take a lovely Peak Frequency lunch break.

4 p.m. → Plant and water

After the heat of the day has passed, set out the seedlings according to your plan. Tip the plants out of their containers and gently loosen matted roots with your fingers (try not to use gloves so that skin will absorb valuable soil minerals), then plant each seedling so that the top of the rootball is even with the soil. Water your new garden well, even though it's late afternoon (usually you'll want to water it early in the morning before sun gets hot). If plants begin to look less perky during their growth, make some stinging nettles tea, let it cool, and water the garden with some extra iron, calcium, magnesium, and potassium.

Summer → Watch it grow

As the weather gets warmer, your garden will really take off. In about six to eight weeks your plants will be fairly mature with blossoms galore, and some plants, like thyme, oregano, chives, and arugula will already have spring offerings for you to clip and use. Taking away leaves and stems, for salads and teas, from varying spots on the plant will encourage more growth and you will have produce all summer long.

Care tips

Watering: Soil needs to be moist to the touch, but not soggy. For the first few weeks, this may mean daily watering, or more, depending on the weather. If it's not unusually hot, taper off watering to every second or third day, making sure the soil doesn't dry out. Pinch off basil buds as they appear to keep leaves growing.

Harvesting: In general, pick each vegetable as they appear ready, erring on the side of less maturity as elderly vegetables tend to get pithy; tomatoes are red, crook neck develops a full round bottom, and cucumber skins get slick and not too big. Pick leaves as needed, remembering that excess can be dehydrated and stored in glass jars, and pick even if you aren't going to use them to keep plants producing.

