

GROWING VEG. - CROP ROTATION

27 May, 2020

WHY DO IT ?

Crop rotation is a very important tool to use in your garden, it's easily done and makes planning your year round vegetable garden easier. The reasons to do it are-

- *Soil fertility!*

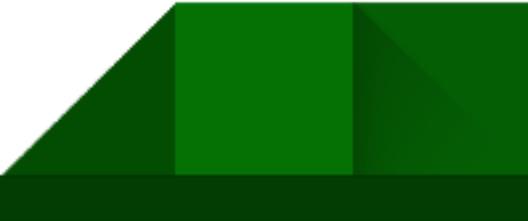
It's important to have healthy soil, and if you keep growing the same veg in the same spot then it is going to deplete the same nutrients. If you rotate around, for example if you just finished a harvest of Broad beans- which are Legumes who put nitrogen in the soil, then plant in Brassicas such as winter cabbage or Kale then they will be very happy with their nitrogen rich soil.

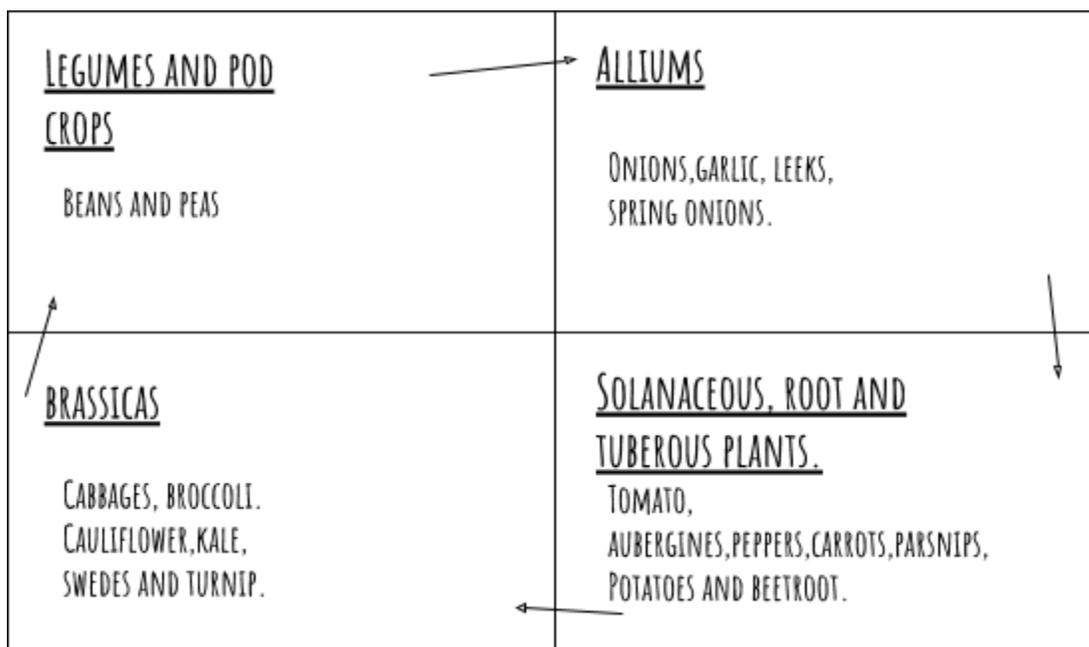
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- *Prevent build up of soil-borne pests/ diseases.*

For example if you keep planting cabbage in the same place over and over then that will greatly increase the risk of club root, or if you keep planting onions in the same location then this will increase the risk of onion white rot.

HOW TO START CROP ROTATION.

This is a very good practice to try and follow, the most important thing to remember and to do is to have one full cropping season -ideally two, without repeating a vegetable group in the same area.





As the picture above shows, there are four main groups that vegetables are grouped into.

There are certain quick growing vegetables that don't go into any group. These can be used where there's free space or as an intercrop. These are plants like radish and lettuce for example, they are good to use for those

purposes but still make sure to mix it up every few years, not planting them in the same place.

Any perennial vegetables should have their own area to grow these are plants like rhubarb, asparagus and strawberries.

To follow this diagram and the reasoning behind it here's an example of a growing year.

Grow legumes i.e early peas that are ready to harvest in may then follow this by brassicas such as cabbage as these love the high nitrogen conditions left by the legumes.

Another option would be to sow green manure mustard crops after the brassicas as this stops any cysts left from the brassicas from opening instead it will harden them and stop them from spreading in the soil. This will replenish the soil with nutrients but will mean leaving the soil unproductive in that area for a few weeks unless you want to plant around it. You can follow this with root vegetables like onions, garlic.