

# Planning Your Garden

Like anything, spending time at the beginning to develop a plan for your garden will help serve as a guidepost as you set about creating your garden dream.

## Among the things to consider in your plan are:

**Where's the sun?** You need lots of sun for a vegetable garden (at least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day). Before you finalize your location choice, take a couple of days to observe how the sun "visits" your space during the day and make sure there's enough sunlight to help your veggies grow.

**Where are you going to get the water?** Rainy days take on new meaning as they help with the watering needs of your garden. It's likely, though, that you will need to supplement Mother Nature's watering efforts with some of your own. Setting up your garden close to an accessible source of water will provide an extra measure of convenience for you as the season progresses.

**How much space do you need?** Even the smallest of spaces can become a great place for the start of your veggie gardening "career." Growing in containers is a good option for those who live in apartments, and growing veggies such as beans and peas that can climb upwards on walls can help you squeeze lots of gardening into a small area.

And if you have a lot of available space, you might want to think about a "more than one year" plan for how your garden will develop over time.

**What's the quality of your soil?** Much of the success of your gardening efforts will depend on your soil's quality. A simple way to figure out the type of soil that you have in your garden is to scoop a handful of soil and give it a squeeze. If you have sandy soil, it will be crumbly and won't hold its shape in your hand; sandy soils don't retain much moisture. If you have clay soil, it will form a lump when you squeeze it; clay soils get sticky when wet and turn very hard when dry. Loam, the ideal garden soil, will form into a ball when you squeeze it but will break apart easily. To improve any soil – sand, clay or loam – add compost. Not only will it provide a nutrient boost but it will improve the texture of your soil.

