

# APS School Garden Network Monthly Meeting

March 16, 2022

PLOT  
AGAINST  
HUNGER





# **Growing together - Let's Dig in!**

**Introductions. Follow up from last month.**

**Planning for the Season:**

- **March Action Items**
- **Garden Layout for Maximum Yield and Minimal Work**
- **Building Soil**
- **Building School Community - Example of School Community Engagement**

**Announcements and Coming Events**

**Questions? Sharing Ideas and Community Resources**



# March Action List:

## Garden Tasks:

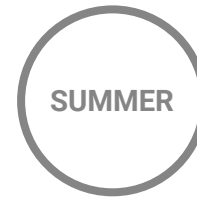
- Cleanout of beds
- Garden layout
- Pruning fruit trees
- Soil tests / Build soil
- Infrastructure repair
- Tools care
- Acquiring and starting seeds

## Garden Committee Tasks:

- Form Committee
- School Staff engagement
- PTA presentation for volunteers
- Determine budget
- Setting goals
- Community workday
- Fundraiser planning



# Milestones for the year ahead



## Getting Started

- PTA presentation
- Staff engagement
- Team building
- Workdays
- Soil test / Fertility
- Spring Planting
- First Harvest

## Building Community

- Regular workdays
- Harvest donations
- Classroom activities
- Garden visits
- Summer planting
- End of school year

## Keeping It Going

- Summer workdays
- Watering schedule
- Harvest donations
- Community visits
- Summer Camps
- Team planning
- Fall planting

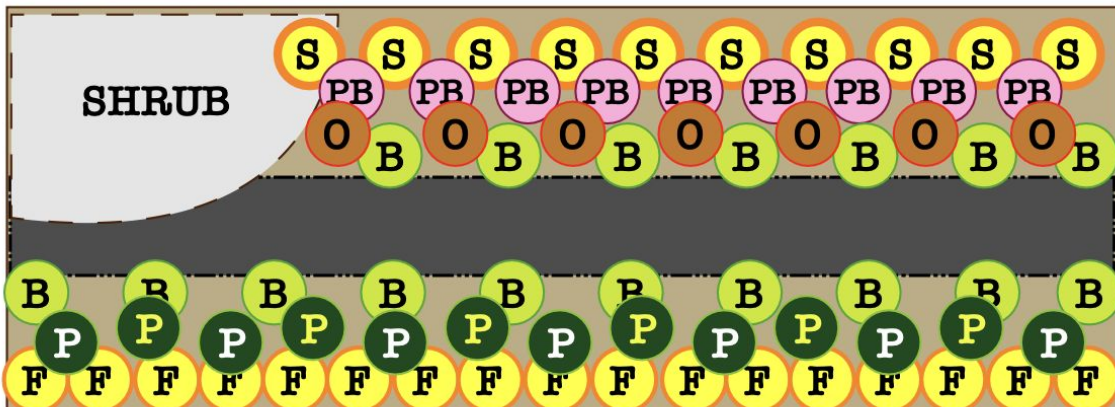
## Back to School

- PTA Presentations
- Garden Coordinator Recruitment
- School Projects
- Fall Harvest Festival
- Urban Ag Month
- New infrastructure



# Garden Preparation

- Wait to clean up until just before planting - (protection for crowns and overwintering beneficial insects)
- If new garden plots, start now! Placement? Raised beds? Soil prep?
- Know what you want to plant and acquire seeds/seedlings.
- Look to VA Co-Op Extension, Plot Against Hunger, FOUA, and others for free/low cost seeds



## Annual Vegetable Gardening Calendar Arlington County

Activity	Month ->	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Order seed catalogues / decide what to grow														
Map the garden: crops, companions, succession, rotation														
Build a planning calendar (See Reverse)														
Check viability and test germination of seeds on hand														
Order / buy seeds														
Till or pull cover crops 2 weeks before planting next crop					x	x	x							
Start hardy vegetables indoors														
Transplant into the garden														
Start tender summer annuals indoors														
Plant (direct sow or transplant) tender summer annuals														
Plant summer catch crop (e.g. buckwheat) as needed														
Plant (direct sow or transplant) fall vegetables														
Plant winter cover crops (e.g., rye, wheat, hairy vetch, fava beans, Austrian winter peas)														
Extend seasons: floating row covers, cold frames, cloches														
Save seeds from open-pollinated annuals at harvest														
Plant garlic for harvest the following June														
Harvest all tender annuals before first frost														
Compost, incorporate, till or remove residue														
Remove and discard any diseased material														
Mulch (8") overwintering vegetables (e.g., carrot, parsnip)														
All beds should be planted, composted or mulched														
Cleanup, maintain and store garden tools and equipment														
Rest, write your wish list for garden gifts														

### Notes on starting plants indoors

See individual instructions with seeds

Cabbage, Cauliflower, Brussels Sprouts, Broccoli

Start in flats 4 to 6 weeks before planting out

Tomato, Eggplant, Pepper

Start in flats 6 to 8 weeks before planting out and transplant into deeper flats (6 in) or pots midway

Many other plants can be started in flats to save space in the garden, such as corn, wheat, melon, herbs, etc.

### Recommended Sustainable Gardening Practices

- Periodically test and amend the soil with minerals, nutrients
- Build & maintain soil organic matter with compost and cover crops.  
200 lbs/100sq ft for development -- 50 -100 lbs/sq ft to maintain
- Use French intensive method – deeply dig with hand tools (24 in)
- Rotate crops; companion plant; interplant; “right plant, right place”
- Irrigate as needed to maintain moisture
- Keep the garden covered: succession, mulches, cover crops
- Till and aerate properly; use permanent paths; avoid compression

Too late?



Horticulture Help Desk: 703 228 6414  
mqarlalex@gmail.com



Month	March				April			May			June			July			August			September			October		
Date	1	11	21	31	10	20	30	10	20	30	9	19	29	9	19	29	8	18	28	7	17	27	7	17	27
Crop																									
Collards	P								H								P							H	→
Onion, set	P				P&H					H															→
Peas, garden	P						H																		
Radish	P		P&H				H										P		P&H						→
Spinach	P				H															P				H	→
Turnips	P				H												P				P&H		H		→
Potatoes		P									H														
Beets			P						H									P						H	→
Cabbage*			P						H							P						H			→
Carrots			P						H				P&H			P			H						→
Lettuce, bibb			P							H						P					H				→
Lettuce, leaf			P					H								P				H					→
Broccoli*				P							H					P&H	P						H		→
Brussels sprouts*				P								H				P							H		→
Cauliflower*				P					H							P					H				→
Beans, bush					P						P&H						H								
Beans, pole					P								P&H		H										
Corn, sweet					P								P&H				H								
Cucumbers						P						P&H								H					
Eggplant*						P									H										
Muskmelons						P								H											
Cantaloupe						P								H											
Peppers*						P							P&H	H											
Pumpkins						P									H										
Squash, summer						P					P&H								H						
Squash, winter						P									H										
Sweet Potato						P									H										
Tomatoes*						P							P&H		H										
Watermelon						P									H										
Key																									
Plant																									
Plant & Harvest																									
Harvest																									
* Transplants - See notes on reverse					Start																				

Still  
wondering  
what to  
plant?

## Most Valuable Crop?

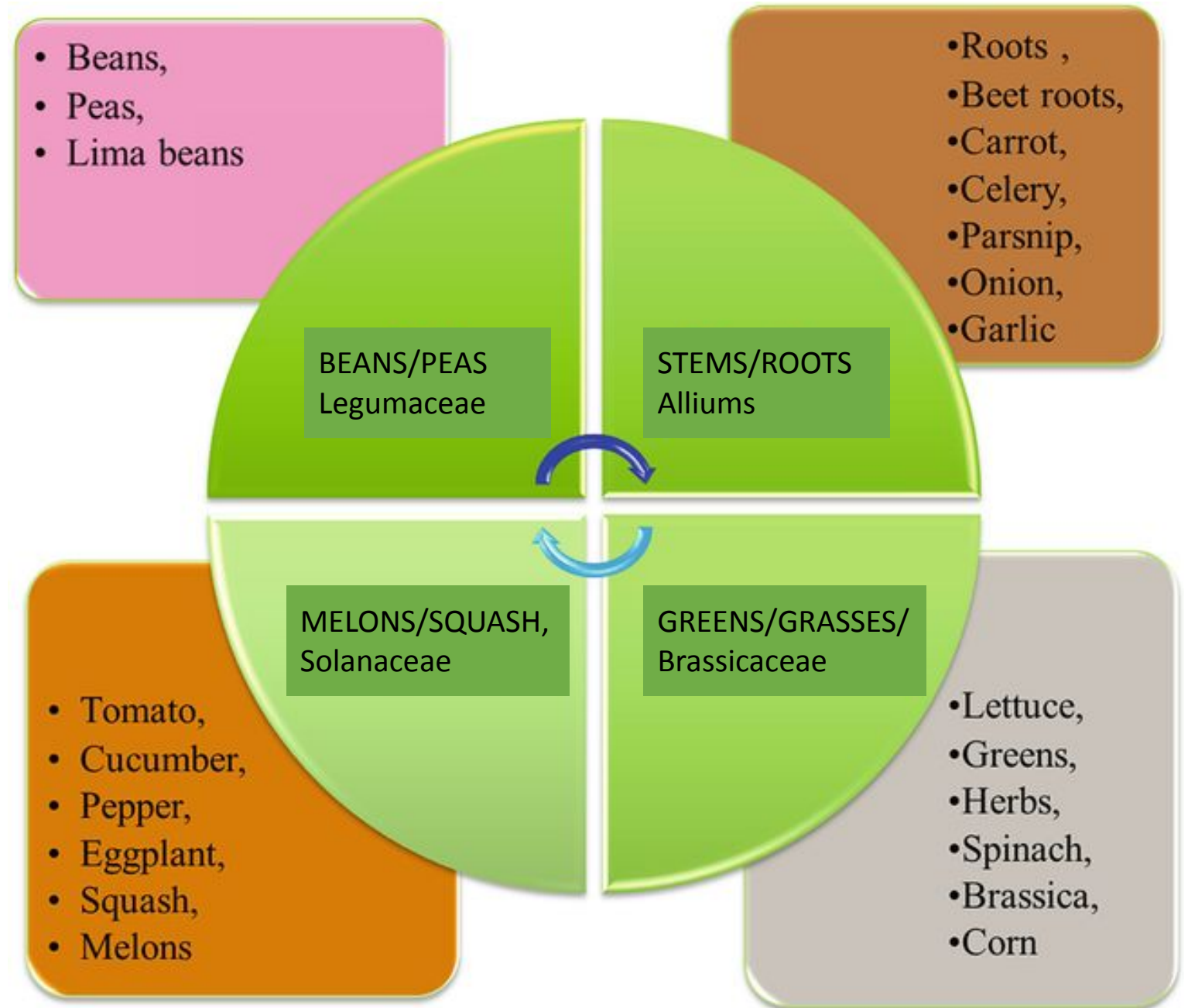
In Virginia, the top 15 annual vegetable crops in terms of economic value are:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tomatoes                | <input type="checkbox"/> Beans (pole and bush) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beets                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Broccoli              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carrots                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Chard                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cucumbers               | <input type="checkbox"/> Green onions          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce (head and leaf) | <input type="checkbox"/> Onions                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peas (edible pods)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Peppers               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Summer squash           | <input type="checkbox"/> Turnips               |

Least value for us? Corn, melons, pumpkins and winter squash Grow vertically on some form of trellis to increase the value per square foot?



# Planning: 'Crop' Rotation



# Review Planning: Intercropping

## Crops

## Companion Plants

Beans	→	Cucumbers, cauliflower, cabbage
Egg Plant		Beans
Celery		Tomato, cauliflower, cabbage
Corn	→	Peas, beans, cucumber, squash
Cucumbers		Beans, corn, peas
Cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli		Celery, dill, rosemary, beet
Lettuce	→	Radish, cucumber
Peas		Radish, cucumber, corn, beans



Figure 1. A mixed intercropping of peanuts, watermelons, and okra.



# Site Selection: Light

Low light needs vs High light needs

## Tolerates 4-6 hrs

- Spinach
- Kale
- Peas
- Arugula
- Endive
- Radicchio
- Broccoli
- Kohlrabi
- Mustard

## Thrives on 6-8 hrs

- Potatoes
- Beets
- Carrots
- Turnips
- Lettuce
- Chard
- Collards
- Beans
- Cabbage

## Needs 8+ hours

- Tomatoes
- Pepper
- Eggplant
- Squash
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Melons





# Planning: 9 Considerations

1. Access to water
2. Tall plants (okra, fruit trees, corn) to the north and east unless you want the shade for leafy greens
3. Trellis up your vines (cucumbers, melons, beans, squash, malabar spinach, )
4. Plant cucumbers and eggplant late
5. Inspect and collect squash bug eggs. Daily.
6. Provide water for birds. You want them.
7. Wide beds and intercropping will reduce weeds and make the most of your space
8. Use arborist wood chips for paths with a plan to incorporate them into the soil in future years.
9. Plant herbs and flowers to attract beneficial insects both pollinators and predators



Square foot  
garden at  
Organic  
Veg Demo  
Garden

Need to get up to speed quickly?

Visit <https://mgnv.org/mg-virtual-classroom/>  
for information on composting, seed  
starting, winter vegetable gardening, edible  
landscaping, fruit trees in urban  
environments, and everything in between!



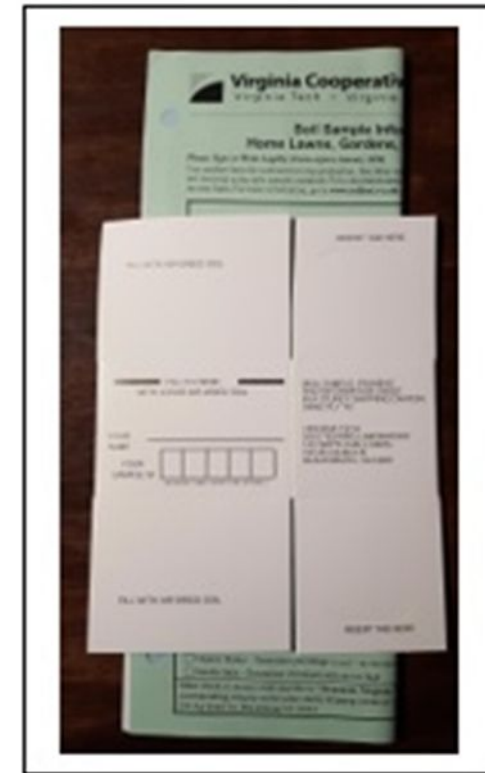
# Soil Building: Tips and Tricks

Use cover crops summer and winter  
Use arborist wood chips  
Compost your garden clippings\*\*\*

Aerate your soil annually

**Soil Test Kit:** Pick one up at the Fairlington Community Center and WATCH VCE Extension Agent Kirsten Conrad show you how easy it is to do a soil test [here](#).

Problems? Call or email the Extension Help Desk at 703 228 6414 or [mgarlalex@gmail.com](mailto:mgarlalex@gmail.com)





## Plot Against Hunger's 2022 Spring Garden Kickoff Part 1 of a new series!



Spring Garden Kickoff  
for those who registered  
for the original event  
date! Seeds & seedling  
giveaways, native plants  
talk & tour.

Saturday, March 19, 1 pm - 4 pm  
Arlington Central Library - 1015 N. Quincy Street

**Updated schedule at [arlingtonurbanag.org](https://arlingtonurbanag.org)**

Presented by:



Local food pantries  
& your gardening  
neighbors

## Seedling pickup

If you registered for seedlings through PLOT

They will be on the front porch at 1914 N. Upton St in  
containers, labeled with your name & garden.

They will be available Friday, March 18th 8 am until  
Sunday, March 27 at 7 pm. (8 am - 7 pm daily ONLY)





**April** - Garden synergies and best practices

- Pest Control.
- Planning garden visits across APS?

**May** - Planning for summer. What happens when the children are out of school?

**June** - Watering systems. Keeping the garden growing.

**July** - Volunteer engagement. Organizing a calendar of work days.

**August** - Fall planting. Arlington County Fair Aug 17-21.

**September** - Back to school, Cover crop planning for fall & winter.

**October** - Harvest Festivals / Urban Agriculture Month. Soil testing.

**November** - Prepping the garden for winter. Cover crop winter maintenance.

**December** - Annual FOIA meeting.



# A Peek at Next Month

**Join the Monthly Garden Coordinator Call on April 20 @ 7:30PM**

**TOPIC: Garden Synergies & Best Practices for Pest Control. Also, we'll propose some in-person garden visits for Late April – Early May.**

- ❖ Earth Day Event: Sunday, April 24, 12-5PM, Lee Heights Shopping Center. In cooperation with the Langston Blvd Alliance.
- ❖ April 30th, Wakefield Plant Sale : Go to [wakefieldpts.org/plantsale](http://wakefieldpts.org/plantsale) to order by April 3
- ❖ Cover Crops and Their Impact on Soil Health podcast: [Episode 243. Cover Crops and Their Impact on Soil Health. Crop Productivity | ATTRA | Sustainable Agriculture Project \(ncat.org\)](#)
- ❖ Spring Celebration and Plant Sale, Glen Carlyn Library, April 23: [Spring Celebration and Plant Sale - Events Calendar - Home \(libcal.com\)](#)
- ❖

***See you next month! Questions? [schoolgardens@arlingtonurbanag.org](mailto:schoolgardens@arlingtonurbanag.org)***



“Life begins the day you start a garden.”

Chinese Proverb

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