HHP FARMERS CLUB
FARM PLOT PREP

The Farm Club members who are Master Gardeners have compiled information on subjects we thought would be helpful to all farmers. This information will also be published on the Farm Club Website. The Clemson Website will answer most gardening questions you may have. Always read the Farm Club article published in Plantation Living for monthly information.

Farm Club Website – www.hhpfarmers.com
Clemson Website - www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/vegetables/gardening/

Soil Test
For an accurate test collect soil 6-8 inches deep in 6 or more areas. Place samples in a clean bucket and mix together thoroughly. Take 2 cups of the soil to the Clemson Extension office on Wednesday Morning from 9:30-12:00. (The extension office is located in the Beaufort County building across from the First Presbyterian Church on William Hilton Parkway, Rt. 278). You will receive written results of your sample and will know how to treat you soil for planting. The cost of a soil test is $6.00. They do not like to take cash so please be prepared to write them a check.

Soil Amendment
Our soil is mostly sand and will not retain moisture or nutrients, therefore we need to amend the soil. Commonly available sources of organic matter include compost, manures, shredded leafs, sawdust, and cover crops.

Refer to the Planting Chart (attached) for a planting schedule.

Watering
Let's do our part to conserve water! The use of drip or trickle systems will work better than overhead watering. With soaker hoses the water goes directly on the root. The farm area is open so if the wind is blowing the overhead watering sprays everywhere and is inefficient. Watering with an overhead source may increase disease problems. Watering in the early morning may decrease or reduce the chances of disease outbreak. Hand watering is also good but it takes time to water properly. If you are hand watering, make sure you are watering enough to soak to the roots. Rule of thumb for watering your garden is 1 inch 3 times a week. A good test to check the amount of water getting to your plants is to take several small cans (tuna fish cans work great), place in the garden and after your water runs measure the amount of water in the can.

Reducing your water demands
Adding organic matter to the soil prior to planting will conserve water and reduce the amount of water needed. Mulching will also decrease the amount of water that needs to be added to the soil. A 2-3 inch layer of organic mulch suppresses weed growth and reduces water evaporation from the soil.

Fertilizing
Follow the soil test recommendations. Always read and follow the label on the product you are using. The label of the fertilizer will tell you the quantity to use.

Common Pests in the Garden
Maintain the appropriate soil PH to give the plants access to all the necessary soil nutrients. Always read the label and follow the directions on any chemical you use in your garden. Keep all weeds pulled and keep your garden free of debris to help eliminate pests.

Voles – use crushed eggshells in the plant row with the vegetables to deter the voles from the garden.
Mildew – spray with mixture of 1/3 parts milk and 2/3 parts water.

Fire Ants – A plot that is frequently tilled may cause the ants to move to another location. Some fire ant baits can be used both within the garden and on the grass around the garden. Always read the product label for where and how it can be safely used.

Weeds

Weeds compete with vegetables for water, nutrients and light. They can also harbor pests. Control the weeds early. One method is to put newspaper between the rows (watering the newspaper as soon as you put it on the ground will make it easier to work with). Place mulch on top of the newspaper. If the mulch is put directly on the ground weeds will grow in it. If you put the newspaper down most weeds will not grow through it. It is a lot of work to do this but when the weather is cooler this method is easier than pulling weeds in the heat of May and June.

Harvesting your vegetables

Harvest your vegetables at their peak quality. Some gardeners fall into the "bigger is better" mindset and allow crops to stay on the plant too long. Almost all vegetables are best when harvested early in the morning. Vegetables regain moisture overnight that they lost during the day. Cool them as soon as possible after harvest. Go to the Clemson website for tips on harvesting common vegetables.

Preparing your plot between plantings

Always make sure all weeds have been removed and cover with plastic. This will keep the weeds from growing and spreading weed seeds into your neighbor's plot. Your plot will then be ready to cultivate and plant when the planting season is here. Do not plant the same plant in the same location every year. Practice crop rotation.

Call any of the Farm Club members who are Master Gardeners with your questions.
You can find their names listed on our website: hhpfarmers.com Board of Directors page.
Each of us would be glad to meet with you one on one to answer any questions you have. We do not always have the answers but we know where to find the answer for you.

Planting Chart - Dates to plant in South Carolina

Vegetable	Spring	Fall
Asparagus	Jan 1 -Feb 28	
Beans, Snap	Mar 15-30	Aug 15-30
Beans, Pole	Mar 20-30	Aug 1-10
Beans, Lima	Mar 20-30	Aug 1-10
Beans, Pole Lima	Mar 20-Apr 15	July 20-30
Beets	Dec 15-Jan 30	Aug 1-20
Broccoli	Feb 15-Mar 1	Aug 10-Sept 15
Brussels Sprouts	--	Aug 1-15
Cabbage	Dec1-Jan15	Aug 1-15
Cantaloupe	Mar 10-Apr 10	
Carrots	Dec 15- Jan 30	Aug 1-20
Cauliflower		Aug 1-20
Collards	Feb 20-Mar 15	Aug 1-15
Cucumbers	Mar 20-30	Aug 1-20
Eggplant	Mar 25-Apr 10	July 20-25
Garlic		Oct 1-Nov 30
Kale		Aug 15-25
Lettuce	Dec 20-Feb 5	Aug 15-25
Mustard	Jan1 - Feb 25	Aug 15- Oct 1
Onion Sets	Feb 1- Mar 1 -	Oct 1--Nov 30
Okra	Apr 1-20	June 15- 30
Peanuts	Apr 25-May 25	
Peas	Jan 10-20	
Pepper	Mar 25-Apr 10	July 20-25
Potatoes, Irish	Feb 1-15	July 15-30
Potatoes, Sweet	Apr 15-July 1	
Pumpkins		July 1- 15
Radish	Jan 1-Mar 1	Sept 1-Nov 1
Rutabaga		Aug 1-20
Spinach	Jan 1 - Feb 25	Sept 15-Nov 10
Sweet Corn	Mar 10-Apr 10	
Squash, Summer	Mar 20-April 10	Aug 10-25
Squash, Winter	March 20-Apr 10	Aug 10-25
Tomato	Mar 25-Apr 10	July 25-30
Turnips	Jan 1-Mar 1	Aug 25-Oct 15
Watermelon	Mar 25-Apr 20	