



Summer Gardening

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Planting our future! [Family gardens](#) [1] is all about your future and the future of the earth.

Planting summer gardens

Summertime planting is under way.

I have been waiting to do some summer gardening to prepare and plant my garden for weeks. I am happy to say that these last few sunny days have given us the chance to plant our summer gardens.

My daughters and I have been doing some gardening and have gotten everything planted for the summer. Preparing our garden beds and planting corn, squash, onions and potatoes; cucumbers, peppers and squash. In early spring when we had a clear stretch of weather my wife planted our spring garden of lettuce, broccoli, cabbage and peas.

We have a small homestead farm, about 3 acres including a small orchard and vineyard and a 1/2 acre of alfalfa to feed our animals and the soil.

Preparing garden beds:

We have two methods of preparing our garden beds.

Sheet compost:

Sheet composting in the fall is done by adding at least 6 inches of mulch, manure or leaves to your garden beds. This will keep down the winter weeds and feed your garden beds.

In the spring we loosen or dig our garden beds adding any other amendments we have for the season.

Green Manure or cover crop:

After the fall harvest clear the beds and roto till the garden.

In the fall plant a legume and grain. Oats and vetch are some common cover crops.

In the spring your cover crops will start to flower which is a good time to turn them into the soil. If nessesary roto till or hand turn your beds earlier so that the green manure will have two to four weeks to break down before planting. Till again right before planting and then prepare garden beds using [organic compost](#) [2] and broken down manure and any other amendments you have for the season and long term fertility of the beds.

I use a roto tiller on our homestead farm to turn in my cover crops, when I was younger I used to turn all my

garden beds by hand. My wife still exclusively uses the hand farm methods incorporating our barn manure in a sheet composting method.

Our household grows about 80% of our own food using these organic gardening methods.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.family-gardens.com>

[2] <http://www.family-gardens.com/organic-compost.html>