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Gardening Round 2

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So I am eagerly anticipating the beginning of spring. Last year I had two garden beds (5' x 10', and 4' x 8'). Then after I put those beds to rest for the winter I dug one more patch (3' x 16') before the grounds started to freeze. I grew a variety of things and there were great successes and huge failures:) Failures: Sweet Corn (drought), Watermelon (Sugar Babies and Big Red-drought), Carrots (rocky soil), Cabbage (cabbage white flies), Bell Pepper (transplant shock), Parsley (transplant shock), Strawberries (unknown assailant), Leeks (transplant shock), Zebra tomatoes (transplant shock), Spinach (bolted). Successes: Mint, Cucumber (duh, "Yard Long"-the joke was on me, those things were huge), Kale, Mustard Greens, Radish, Cherry Tomato, Rosemary, Sage, Dill (coming out of my ears), Broccoli, Romain Lettuce, Leaf Lettuce, Mesclun Lettuce Mix, Unknown Tomato, Bush Beans. I learned a whole bunch (pun intended-I know, corny) from my garden last year and I am ready to put what I've learned into practice. I already have a plan set up for this year, based on the square-foot method, but I will be incorporating different ideas from all of my resources. It's not set in stone, but if I followed it to the "T" I would have no worries about "what's for dinner tonight". I planned my garden using the MOTHER EARTH NEWS Vegetable Garden Planner: http://www.motherearthnews.com/garden-planner/vegetable-garden-planner.aspx [1] Currently, the planner is available as a 30-day, ABSOLUTELY NO STRINGS ATTACHED, FREE TRIAL (emphasis my own). It's a work in progress, but I was able to utilize this tool to complete my project (one that was taking me months to do on my own) within a few hours! I think those hours were totally worth it. I mean I planned my crops for Spring, Summer, and Fall for ~150 sq. ft. of growing space. I know, 150 sq. ft. is a little ambitious for a year-two novice such as myself, but the hardest part of raising food last year (for me any way) was figuring out what to put in the ground, when, and how. Plus, I need this large space to provide at least 30% of the fresh produce needs for 7 individuals. There has been many-a-time when produce was brought home, in bulk, and rotted away from lack of use, in bulk. My mission is to not let this happen to my family ever again! My main strategy: Bio-intensity. My core methods: Square-Footing, Succession Planting, and Seasonal Appropriateness. The week of the 21st I hope to acquire my organic and heirloom seeds. I will be starting my spring crops indoors the first or second full week of March. This will put my seedlings at about 4-5 weeks old, around the time of the last frost. I will move them outside at about 6-8 weeks old, when the danger of frost is well behind them. Yay food!

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[1] http://www.motherearthnews.com/garden-planner/vegetable-garden-planner.aspx