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W036-African-American Theme Garden

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

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Steps to Planning a Theme Garden

1. Determine what type of theme garden you would like. In this case, we want an African-American theme.

2. Determine the location and size of your garden. Select an area that receives at least six hours of full sunlight every day and is close to a water source.

3. Take a soil sample and send it to be analyzed with the help of your county Extension agent.

4. The shape of your garden may be a 4’x4’ square area or whatever fits into your landscape scheme!

5. Amend the soil according to soil test results. Using a tiller, work in a 3-inch layer of organic matter (peat moss, manure, rotted compost, etc.) to improve the soil structure.

6. Select plants from a list of recommended varieties.

7. Plant warm-season vegetables, such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant & most herbs, after April 25th to avoid frost or freeze damage.

8. Water, weed, fertilize and harvest on a weekly basis throughout the growing season.

9. Enjoy your abundance of fresh vegetable and herbs.

African-American culture is based on religious ceremonies, feasting, cooking and raising food. Many foods traditionally grown by people of color are high in nutrients, such as collard greens and other leafy green and yellow vegetables, legumes, beans, rice and potatoes. Cultural diversity is a important issue to many groups in the United States. Both food and culture play a major role in American nutrition.

Spicy, Hot Salad

2 onions
2 radishes
2 large carrots
1 large tomato
1 small head lettuce
1 bunch fresh coriander, chopped
Mix of mustard greens, spinach, collard & other tasty greens
1-2 hot chili peppers, chopped
Salt & pepper to taste
Grate onions, radishes and carrots and place in salad bowl. Add remaining ingredients and toss well. Add lemon juice to taste.
Recommended Plants

Warm-season:
Cucumber: Whether pickling or slicing, harvest often to keep plants producing.
Okra: For tenderness, harvest pods when 3-4 inches long.
Black-eyed peas: Make successional plantings once the soil has warmed. Highly nutritious and easy to grow.
Watermelon: Experienced growers say that a green watermelon gives a “ping” sound when thumped, while a ripe watermelon gives a dull “thud” sound!

Cool-season:
Collards: Set plants out early for picking early spring to summer greens.
Spinach: High in Vitamins A and C, this an important green to have in your garden. Use fresh as a salad or cooked.
Turnip greens: Easy to grow and equal to spinach and collards in nutritional value.
Mustard greens: Mix young leaves in with other salad greens.
Others: Cabbage, onions, butter beans, leaf lettuce, radishes and many herb varieties.

More information:
A large number of gardening resource materials are available at no charge on the UT Extension Website, with more materials added all the time. Visit [www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/default.htm](http://www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/default.htm)

Some Extension gardening and foods publications include:
- PB724 Canning Foods
- PB725 Preserving Foods
- PB774 Food Storage Guide
- PB901 Growing Vegetables in Home Gardens
- PB 1215 Disease Control in the Home Vegetable Garden
- PB1228 Gardening for Nutrition
- PB 1391 Organic Vegetable Gardening
- SP 291-A Growing Vegetable Transplants
- SP 291-B Growing Vegetables from Seed
- SP 291-C Soil Preparation for Vegetable Gardens
- SP 291-D Care of the Vegetable Garden
- SP 291-G Fall Vegetable Gardens
- SP 291-I Weed Control in Home Gardens
- SP 291-L Fresh Vegetable Storage for the Homeowner
- SP 291-N Raised Bed Gardening
- SP 291-O Guide to Spring-planted, Cool-season Vegetables
- SP 291-P Guide to Warm-season Vegetables
- SP 325-D Canning Vegetables
- SP 425-A Healthy Tennesseans Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

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