Recommended Site Prep for 2013 Vegetable Variety Trial

SOIL: Use whatever garden soil medium you have available, avoiding problem soils or areas that may have contamination. The CGBL demo site on campus at Cornell was most recently a parking lot/construction site.

Raised beds will be constructed on top of the recently established lawn. We brought in a 1/3 compost & 2/3 topsoil mix for the beds. For nine 3’ x 3’ raised beds 12 inches high this equals about 80 cubic feet of soil, or two small pick up truck loads.

We recommend conducting all the various soil tests of your soil as directed at www.gardening.cornell.edu/soiltesting.

➔ You can see a simple design and short video of the 2012 Vegetable Variety Demo Garden from the Cornell campus here: http://blogs.cornell.edu/garden/2012-vegetable-variety-trial/

LAYOUT: The CGBL demonstration garden will be constructed as follows:

1) Stake out 15’ x 15’ foot area, and each 3’ x 3” bed area
2) Aerate the soil with a garden fork and place cardboard over the entire site
3) Lay down approx 2” of woodchips
4) Construct raised beds and fencing for the site, put in place and fill with soil/compost mix
5) Add an additional 2 - 4” of woodchips to the path areas between beds

RAISED BEDS: CGBL used milled 2” x 6” x 12” black locust to construct our raised beds. (Black locust is a non-treated, rot resistant wood safe for growing food. If this is not available, use untreated lumber or another rot-resistant wood. Do NOT use pressure treated lumber. It does last longer but can be toxic to grow edibles in.) To construct 9 beds this amounts to approximately 108 board feet. You can simply mark out 3’ x 3’ spaces in existing beds, adapt existing raised beds, or construct beds from whatever materials are readily available and affordable.

FENCING: Our fencing is approximately 4’ tall and consists of small diameter black locust posts sunk 24” into the ground (6’ total length), with posts every 5 feet. We fit cross pieces and then line the fenced area with black plastic deer netting – which we plan to replace with something stronger in the future to allow for vertical growing. This equates to needing twelve posts, sixteen crosspieces, and 60 feet of 4’ deer netting.

SIGNAGE: The signage we send you and use in our garden will be laminated 8.5 X 11 sheets with information for each garden bed (9). The signage will contain descriptions of the selected varieties and the associated ecological gardening technique. There will
additionally be two (2) signs promoting the vegetable varieties site. We will not provide a means to hold signage; you will need to figure out an outdoor system that works best for your garden and can hold up in the rain.

GARDEN PLANTING: County offices doing the FULL trial will receive plant starts at the May 8th, In-Service at Cornell University. Offices doing the PARTIAL trial should plan to start your own seeds and may follow the seed variety guide available at: http://blogs.cornell.edu/garden/vegetablevarietytrial/

ALL Counties should plan on supplying your own early spring seeds including snap peas and spinach and cover crop seed. Early spring crops can be sown as soon as the soil can be worked. You will receive cover crop instructions. All other seeds needed for direct sowing will be mailed by March 30th to those counties doing the FULL trial.

You can refer to the planting guide on our site for the timing of other seeds. Most seeds should be started indoors in April for a summer harvest.

ECOLOGICAL GARDENING TECHNIQUE: Each bed offers not only multiple vegetable varieties but also features an ecological gardening technique to promote healthy soil. If you chose not to follow these guidelines the only consequence is that the signage we offer may not match the bed.

QUESTIONS can be directed to Liz Falk efalk@cornell.edu.