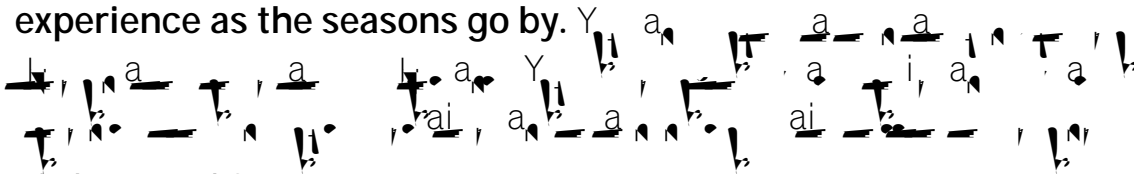


Garden record keeping

Keeping garden records will improve the quality of your gardening experience as the seasons go by.



Why keep records?

'Cultivate' is defined as 'to improve or develop by careful attention, training, or study'. Vegetable gardens need to be cultivated and record keeping can help! The type of information you record depends on what you want to study. Here are a few examples:

Soil management: What compost and soil amendments did you apply? How much? Where? Have they helped improve soil qualities? Have they had an impact on plant growth? Having soil tested every three years is a great addition to soil management records.

Crop management: What vegetables did you grow and which did you like? Where did the seed or plants come from? How much space did it take? When did you harvest? Yields? Quality? Pest problems?

Crop rotation: What crops were planted in each location last year? Rotation makes better use of nutrients and helps prevent buildup of pests.

Harvest and preservation: Did you have a hundred zucchini and only two servings of peas? Did you harvest enough for preserving? Which varieties were better for preserving?

Microclimates: Are some areas in your garden warmer, colder, wetter? Which crops do best in which areas?

Garden layout: Do intensive beds work better than rows? Do raised beds make a difference? Which companion planting combinations work?

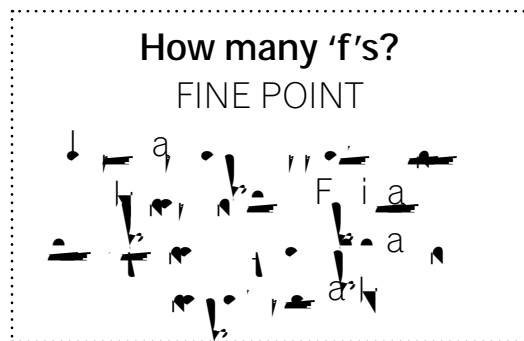
Timing: Does planting at different soil temperatures

Activity 1

Attention to detail.

When keeping garden records, it's important to pay attention to details. Try this puzzle to see how our mind sometimes plays tricks on what we think we see. The answer is at the bottom of the page.

Read the words in the box and count the number of times the letter f (or F) appears.



Activity 2

Down to business.

Decide what you would like to learn from your garden. Make a list of the information you will record. Decide on a method of record keeping that will work for you.

Activity 3

Monthly garden jobs.

Check out the Old Farmer's Almanac for a list of monthly garden jobs (<http://www.almanac.com/gardening/jobs>). Make notes of monthly jobs in your own records for the coming year.