
The Agricultural Experiment Station
FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

Hints to Plains Settlers
THE HOME GARDEN

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All settlers will need fresh vegetables as soon as they can be grown. As it will be impossible to buy what is wanted, each settler must raise his own.

The first start can be made by spading up a few square feet near the kitchen, where radishes, lettuce, onion sets and a few favorite vegetables may be planted and watered when necessary, by waste water from the kitchen.. Use all waste water to help the growth of vegetables. Cabbage and tomato plants should be started in the house. And these should be added to the kitchen garden later. Each plant should have an empty can beside it with holes in the bottom. These cans, filled with water occasionally, will keep the plants growing, and will use the water to best advantage.

After the kitchen garden is made, the larger garden for peas, beans, sweetcorn, sunflowers, artichokes, cucumbers, melons, squashes, potatoes and pumpkins, should be plowed and prepared for crop. All planted in this large garden should be planted in rows far enough apart to be cultivated with horses. Peas, beans, sweetcorn and many other seeds may be planted with a two-horse corn planter.

This large garden should contain from one to five acres and it should be so located that some extra water from the surrounding land may be turned onto it when dashing rains come. This water may be controlled somewhat by furrows drawn so as to lead the water where it is wanted. The best of these large gardens that I have seen, were planted between May 10th and June 15th. So, if a settler begins work on his garden by May 1st, he will have a chance to raise a good garden the first year.

This large garden should include of annual plants, peas, beans, cabbage, melons, cucumbers, Swiss chard, potatoes, sweet corn, Mexican beans, onions from sets, sunflowers and artichokes. Then, rhubarb, horse radish and asparagus should be planted as soon as possible, as these have proved valuable in eastern Colorado.

Cucumbers, watermelons and muskmelons may be started in sods kept protected from frost. Allow about 4 inches square on surface of sod for each hill. When danger from frost is past, usually about May 20th, cut sods so as to separate the hills, transplant each with its piece of sod to the open ground. We can often gain two weeks in getting plants started by planting in this way.

Onion sets should be planted instead of onion seeds, as seeds do not often grow to be good onions the first year. It may pay to plant seed so as to raise bottom sets for use the second year. A good bed of multiplier onions will be found valuable a year after planting the sets. Onion sets should be planted deep.

Only the earlier varieties of melons and tomatoes can be depended upon to produce crops.

During a good season for sweet corn, six varieties selected according to time necessary to mature have often furnished roasting ears during ten or more weeks. Varieties suitable for this may be selected from almost any reliable seedsman's catalog. They may be planted the same day. While planting sweet corn, plant liberally, as the fodder and what corn is not used for roasting ears will make fine cow feed during the time of dry grass. Also, parched sweet corn is a valuable food for a family during winter.

Winter water melons and winter musk melons can be raised and stored in straw above ground until Christmas or perhaps later.

Artichokes are very productive, and are good food for people. They may be used either as pickles, fresh or cooked. They will produce best if planted on low land, where they get extra water. Along the edge of a lagoon is a good location.

A good-sized patch of Russian sunflowers should be planted. They will produce a large yield of seed, and the stalks are valuable as kindling.

Mexican beans should be planted liberally. These are very drought-resistant.

Besides the cultivated plants, we have many wild plants which may be used as food. The common pig weed, lamb's quarter and shepherd's purse are known to most farmers. These, and the much-despised Russian thistle are quite generally distributed, and all make acceptable food when used as "greens." Many varieties of edible mushrooms are found on the prairie. These, and the big puff-balls make a delightful addition to the bill of fare. Only the pink-gilled varieties of mushrooms are safe for food. The puff-balls should be white and firm, and both puff-balls and mushrooms should be free from worms.

By careful, intelligent work, a large part of the food of a family may be supplied from the home garden.