

Pike Lane Gardens – It's all about the soil, selecting your seeds and planning for your 2024 vegetable garden!

- **Is there a good way to keep pests out of my compost? I live in the suburbs and have composted for years. Only recently has a rat family found the bin and taken up residence.**
 - ✓ I use chicken wire to line the interior of my wooden bins to prevent chipmunks and others.
- **Could I use wood ashes from the fire for potassium? Or would it be too alkaline?**
 - ✓ Wood ashes are a good source of potassium. I would suggest being conservative on quantities when scratching into the soil.
- **What is the best soil for planter boxes, please? Potting soil works well? - sorry if I missed it, can be answered in the end to avoid interrupting the presentation flow.**
 - ✓ Potting Soil is the most effective route to go for container gardening. Details are explained and you can access the recording.
- **How do you protect your seedlings and harvest from animals?**
 - ✓ We will discuss in depth how to minimize the chance of those critters!
- **Hi - What is a container garden, does it mean pots?**

I have a space to garden, but weeds keep growing a lot in it, even if we cut. How should I prepare the space before I want to plant? Since I have the weed problem should I do a raised bed or is it a problem if I plant on the ground. Please tell me if I should put garden soil or potting soil in addition to what is on the land.

 - ✓ Yes- A container garden could be pots, grow bags, or even planters. There are many advantages to planting a raised bed which I will go into detail about. The other option is to lay cardboard directly on the ground where your garden bed will be (or a garden fabric) and then build the soil on top. Garden Soil, or a quality composted soil. More details to come.
- **What veggies can we plant now outside?**
 - ✓ It depends on what growing zone you live in. We will begin discussing this at our next webinar. From today, you have learned that direct seeding of spring vegetables are the first seeds to go into the ground.
- **Could you suggest suitable trellis shapes and material for small community gardens?**
 - ✓ I will discuss the various types of trellises/ (both purchased or built) later in the spring.
- **What about square foot gardening?**
 - ✓ Square ft gardening is a technique to maximize your growing space. I will reference variations of this when planting "live" in April.
- **Do you plant any flowers in between any of your crops to help the pollination of your tomato and cucumbers?**
 - ✓ Yes- Flowers are important in your garden for several reasons. I will review what plants are best to plant and the reasons why during our May webinar.

- **I'm interested in purchasing a greenhouse. Can you provide recommendations/specifications I should consider?**
 - ✓ This is a big decision -Purchasing a greenhouse depends on several factors; where you live, what do you want to grow, (starting seedlings versus growing to maturity) and amount of space available. As a general point to consider, the larger the greenhouse, the stronger chance of success.

- **Which stores do you recommend getting seedlings from?**
 - ✓ I stay away from large BOX stores (as you do not know where the seedlings were grown, in what soil medium and were chemicals used. I tend to look for dedicated boutique garden stores that have a large selection of seedlings and knowledgeable staff to review with you.

- **I didn't hear you mention horse manure. is that not good for veggies? we have horses, so hence the question.**
 - ✓ Yes- Horse manure is in the group! It is essential to age this for at least 2 years, and not amend with fresh green manure.

- **What are some good perennial vegetables that i do not have to seed or put in new plants, they just keep sprouting up the next year?**
 - ✓ Asparagus, strawberries, and rhubarb are a few. Part of the gardening adventure is to experiment with new items each year in addition to your proven winners.

- **I am just testing myself to see if I want to garden. I think a container garden works best for me. I saw container gardens at Costco that are boxes on legs, so they don't sit flat on the ground. They were self-watering as well. I think both those things are not good . . .**
 - ✓ I would suggest starting small with 4-5 containers (or grow bags) which I will discuss in more detail in April. You want your first experience to be a positive one and starting smaller and vegetables that are prolific would be my suggestion.

- **If we ordered a seed kit from your site, is there a projected date when they will ship? I am excited to get started!**
 - ✓ You can order the indoor seed starting kit from the Pike Lane Gardens website. Please order no later than 3/22 to be received by 3/29. We will also have a spring seed collection available.

- **How often do you top dress with fertilize your vegetable garden during the growing season?**
 - ✓ We will discuss this in detail during our May webinar.

- **I have raised beds and typically refresh each bed with potting soil on the top. Should I mix it with the existing soil or leave it on top?**
 - ✓ Instead of potting soil, I like to add a soil that has nutrients/compost. You can check at your garden store for brands like "moo doo" I do use potting soil when planting new seeds and will sprinkle on top to protect from the elements. More details to come.

- **Japanese jumping worms have taken over my property and I'm afraid that my compost/leaf litter won't be useful since they'll take out all the nutrients when they break it down, and the rest of my dirt will be nutrient poor. Should I move to container gardening or still plant in the ground?**
 - ✓ Japanese's Jumping worms are a huge challenge and not a quick fix. Maybe cover the beds with a landscaping fabric for the spring season and pick off any worms on the surface during the period. Use containers for your spring garden this year and then experiment with cutting out holes in the garden fabric to plant one variety of summer vegetables (tomato or pepper) and check the results.
- **I hear that certain plants should be planted together, and others should be planted not near each other. Is this true and I want to plant tomatoes and strawberries together. Thoughts?**
 - ✓ We will discuss companion planting and who are my friends and foes when interplanting in May!