



There's Still Time to Plant the Vegetable Garden

The rainy weather this spring has prevented some Iowans from planting their vegetable gardens. Add in other family commitments like proms, graduations, weddings and holidays and the time starts to slip away.

Fortunately, there is still time to plant many vegetable crops. In northern Iowa, the last practical date to plant tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants is June 13. Muskmelon varieties like Earlisweet and Burpee Hybrid and watermelon varieties like Sugar Baby, Petite Sweet and Mickeylee may also be planted until June 13.

Lima beans and early maturing sweet corn varieties like Earliking, Aztec, Sundance and Seneca Horizon can be planted until the end of June.

Cucumbers and summer squash can be planted until July 13. Beets, carrots, snap beans and swiss chard can be planted until the end of July.

If your vegetable gardening is limited by insufficient space or an unsuitable area, consider the possibility of raising fresh, nutritious, homegrown vegetables in containers. A window sill, a patio, a balcony or a doorstep will provide sufficient space for a productive mini-garden.

Almost any vegetable that will grow in a typical backyard garden will also do well as a container-grown plant. Vegetables which are ideally suited for growing in containers include tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, green onions, beans, lettuce, squash, radishes and parsley. Pole beans and cucumbers also do well in this type of garden, but they do require considerably more space because of their vining growth habit. More information about container vegetable gardens can be found at your local county Extension office.

The Northeast Iowa Food & Farm (NIFF) Coalition and the Food & Fitness Initiative are working together to create community environments that support access to fresh, locally grown, healthy, affordable food and safe environments for physical activity and play. More information about these programs can be found at www.niffcoalition.org.