

SPRING VEGGIE GARDEN TUNE-UP

Either you've already planted your veggie garden, or you're "a little behind" (you're not alone). If the latter is true, never fear. You still can plant your favorite tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, beans, herbs and more. So here are a few tips as your spring garden transitions warms up into summer.

WATERING

As plants grow their watering needs increase, especially in raised beds and containers. A slow, thorough watering is always better than a quick watering. You want water to penetrate deeply, not just sit in the top couple inches of soil. Your drip emitters may need to be moved, especially for tomatoes, because the roots have grown out beyond the base of the plant. My experience working in nurseries and gardens for years is that 80-90% of all plant problems originate from lack of water, especially those grown in pots.

SOIL

The soil in your raised bed gardens will sink and settle over time, especially after you remove finished crops. With each planting, top off the soil in your raised beds with *compost*. Adding the Big Harvest Bale, or your own compost, increases soil volume, nutrition, and water retention. Top dress your "in ground" crops with compost as a fertile mulch that feeds crops while retaining moisture in the soil.

FEEDING

Fertilize your crops, especially in raised beds and containers. Plants grow well unfertilized, but only for a short period of time. Once roots grow to the edge of a raised bed or pot, nutrition becomes limiting, and fertilizing is necessary. I like Dr. Earth Tomato, Vegetable, Herb fertilizer for all veggie garden needs. Whatever fertilizer you use, *follow the instructions* for how much to use and how often to re-apply it.

PESTS & DISEASE

Plants are alive, and so are bugs and disease; this is nature. The moment you notice something doesn't look right (e.g. yellow leaves, holes, brown spots), *find out right away*. Don't wait for the plant to die, or you will never find out what actually happened.