



Garden Lesson 8: Putting the Garden to Bed



SCIENCE

Observe, Question,
Identify, Investigate, Research



FOOD & NUTRITION

Prepare Healthy Food



LANGUAGE ARTS

Comprehend, Read, Write



VISUAL ARTS

Draw, Colour, Design,
Create



8.1 INTRODUCTION

When the garden has been harvested, it is time to wrap up for the season. This is known as "putting the garden to bed," and includes removing or covering the plants that are left over and packing away tools and supplies. Putting the garden to bed is the best way to reduce the amount of work that needs to be done at the beginning of the next growing season. The tasks can be completed over multiple days or weeks. It is best to finish putting the garden to bed before the weather is too cold and the ground freezes completely.

Lesson 8 will cover the process of closing your garden and planning for next year, including a brief lesson about crop rotation.

8.2 "TUCKING IN" THE GARDEN

1. Harvest as long as possible before putting the garden to bed! Pay attention to the weather forecast; if there is a frost warning, spread old blankets over plants in danger from frost. For a container garden, store the plant pots inside (a garage or shed will do).
2. When harvest time is over, start cleaning up by removing any plants that are diseased or damaged by insects and any weeds within the garden. Dispose of these in the **green bin**. Next, remove the annual plants. Dispose of them in the **garden compost bin**.

Annual plants grow, produce fruit/vegetables and die within one year.

Examples:



tomato



zucchini



pepper



pea



pumpkin

3. Trim the perennial plants back so that there is only 15-20cm of stem left above the ground. Spreading a layer of compost and mulch would keep them warm and happy. For a container garden, perennials can be stored in a bright place indoors for the winter.

Perennial plants grow, produce fruit/vegetables, and appear to die. However, they will continue growing back for many years.

Examples:



asparagus



many herbs (ex. oregano, sage, thyme)

4. If the garden is planted directly in the ground, consider planting a "cover crop" to protect the soil and keep it healthy, such as kale, oats, winter rye or winter wheat. Some of these may need to be removed in spring to make room for new plants.
5. Clean and sanitize gardening tools and put them away. Don't forget to safely store away any bags of soil or other supplies.



TIPS AND TOOLS

Harvesting too much produce to use yourself? Consider giving it away to friends, family, the food bank or a local food-based charity or organization.



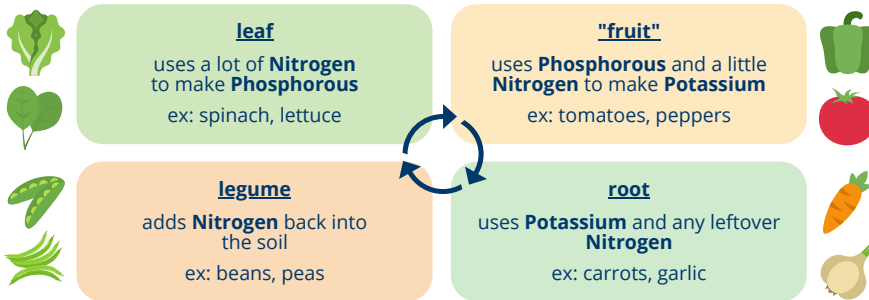
TIPS AND TOOLS

Some popular mulches include wood chips or bark, shredded dry leaves, newspaper or manure. A thick layer of mulch can prevent weeds from sprouting and keep the soil healthy.



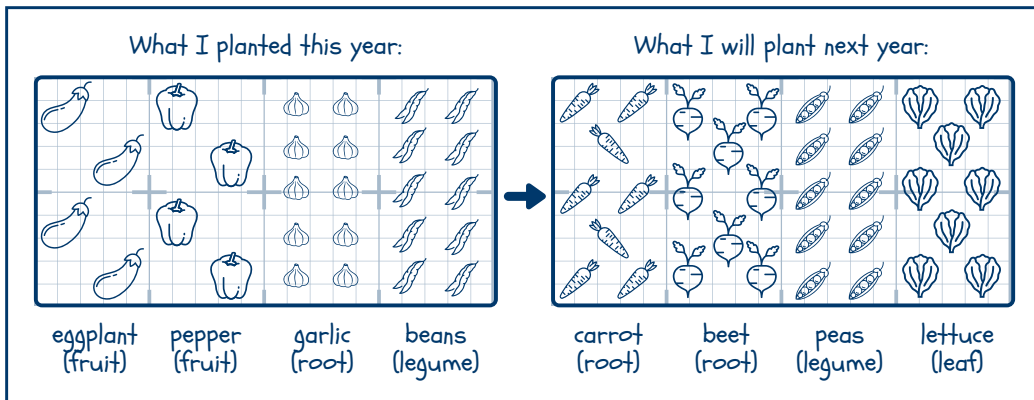
8.3 PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR

- There are many plant "families" that react differently with the soil and add or use up different nutrients. Rotating a new "family" into the soil each growing season can make the garden grow stronger and healthier. This is called **crop rotation**. Here is an example of a common rotation between four plant "families" (leaf, fruit, legume and root) and which nutrients they add or use up:



- Check the map you made in your garden journal during **Lesson 3**. This can act as a guide to show what was planted and where so you can create a crop rotation plan.
- The next blank page in your garden journal should be named "Plan for Next Year." On this page, draw a map of what you planted this year to match the one you drew in Lesson 3.
- Using the chart above, follow the arrows to find out what plant "family" you should plant next year. For example, if you planted a "fruit", plant a "root" in that spot next year. Draw another map that shows the new plants you have chosen. Make sure to clearly label both maps with the name and family of each plant.

8.3.1 EXAMPLE:



- Well done! There's one last step before you're finished for the season. Using seed packages or research online, find out when you need to plant seeds in the spring in order to follow your crop rotation plan. Write these down on the same page as above.

8.3.2 EXAMPLE:

	Carrot	Peas
Direct Sow	2-4 weeks after last frost (Likely May-June)	Early spring (Likely March-April)
Start Indoors	1-2 weeks after last frost (Move outside after 1 week)	6-8 weeks before last frost (Move outside after 4 weeks)

8.3 MATERIALS:

- Garden journal
- Pen or pencil

TIPS AND TOOLS

Companion planting is another technique to consider when planning a garden. This is when different vegetables are planted close together because they offer some benefit to each other, whether it is helping to deter pests or exchanging nutrients.

One of the best examples of companion planting is the **Three Sisters Garden** (corn, beans and squash).



Corn should be planted first and allowed to grow tall. It provides a tall, stable base for beans to climb.



Beans pull nitrogen from the air and add it to the soil, which is good for all three "sisters".



Squash leaves are large and wide; as they cover the soil, they prevent weeds from growing and keep the soil moist.

TIPS AND TOOLS

Three of the most important nutrients for healthy plants are **Nitrogen (N)**, **Phosphorous (P)**, and **Potassium (K)**. Each nutrient has a different function.

Nitrogen (N) is important for plants because it helps grow strong green leaves.

Phosphorous (P) is important for plants because it helps grow seeds, flowers and fruit.

Potassium (K) is important for plants because it helps grow deep, healthy roots.

