

LATE SPRING II

Your first crops should be ready for harvesting! Watch for lettuce, peas, collards, Swiss chard, garlic scapes and radishes. With lettuce and greens, instead of pulling out the whole plant, trim off outer leaves for a fresh salad every day.

While you're harvesting, look closely at your plants. Note the leaf color and how the plant is growing. Even seasoned gardeners have to stay on top of their gardens daily, if only for a short while, inspecting for bug damage like chewed leaves, sawed off stems or droppings on any leaves.

Pay attention to your garden soil as well, testing it before you water. To do this, stick your finger in down to the knuckle...is it dry or wet? If it feels wet, you do not need to water. If it feels dry and there is no rain in the forecast, water thoroughly at the base of the plant stem with your watering can or sprinkler. Checking first not only helps save water, but encourages your plants to grow deeper root systems, which can help them survive dry conditions in the future.

To keep those deep root systems from getting crowded, pick weeds as they come. Since new weed varieties mature all season long, the chore won't end, but keep at it. You'll have a cleaner garden and healthier veggies.

And as you get your warm crops in the ground, try out some companion planting! Some plant varieties, when growing near each other, help to improve the growth, yield or pest resistance of their neighbor. For example, you might plant radishes around squash, melon and cucumbers to help keep squash bugs away. Keep in mind that just as some plants like to grow together, others do not! It's a good idea to check your Growing Guide for companion planting ideas and for information on which plants to keep apart.

Adapted from staff contributions.

GROWING GUIDE | PAGES

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IN THE GP LENDING LIBRARY

Square Foot Gardening | Mel Bartholomew

High-Yield Gardening: How to get more from your garden space and more from your gardening season | Marjorie Hunt & Brenda Bortz

MORE ON COMPANION PLANTING

Golden Harvest Organics: Companion Planting

<http://www.ghorganics.com/page2.html>

Organic Gardening: Companion Planting
<http://www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/companion-planting>