

CONSERVING WATER In Your Vegetable Garden

Edible gardening can be challenging in our area. Sandy soils and harsh weather team up to rob your plants of much-needed water.

Follow these simple steps to boost your soil's water-holding capacity. You'll save time, money, and resources, and get growing.

DO use organic matter.

Use organic matter to help your soil retain nutrients and water, and reduce the loss of nutrients to leaching or drainage. The more organic matter used, the less watering needed.



DO mulch your garden bed.

Mulching your garden bed reduces evaporation, regulates soil temperature, and retains moisture. So, it can reduce the water needed. You also reduce plant stress and soil-borne diseases. Coastal hay, pine straw, and oak leaves are some local mulching options.

DO select for the seasons.

Attempting cold-season crops during warm season wastes water, and usually results in lost crops. That wastes your precious time, resources and money. Learn Florida's growing seasons and zones. With vegetables, it's "right plant, right place, right time."



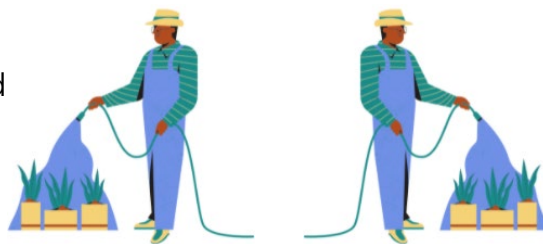
DO group plants by watering needs.

If using irrigation systems or container gardening, plant in "hydrozones." That means grouping plants based on their water needs. And, it means you won't overwater the many just to meet the needs of the few.



DO water the soil and root zones.

Water the soil and root zones, where it's easiest for the plant to access the water. Avoid watering the foliage, which can promote plant disease.



Avoid losing water to evaporation. For vegetables, early-morning watering is the best practice.

DO water before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.

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