

## **Spring Vegetable Gardens**

It's time to get the garden ready for cool season crops such as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, peas, Irish potatoes and onion plants. These crops can be exposed to cold temperatures near 20-22 degrees F without plant death. Don't hesitate to plant these types of plants now. However, there is no such thing as frost proof tomatoes or peppers! These crops cannot withstand freezing temperatures, as they lose the ability to absorb water and nutrients under cold conditions. It is way too early to plant these crops in all areas of Kansas.

Locate the garden in an area that will not interfere with the home landscape. A sunny, level area away from large trees is preferable because tree roots compete for soil nutrients and water. A source of water should be accessible for periods when irrigation is necessary.

Compost or manure spread over the garden and worked in with a garden tiller will improve not only fertility but also soil tilth. Adding organic material such as manure or compost is an important practice in successful gardening.

In choosing varieties for the home garden, consider factors such as disease resistance, yield, maturity date, size, shape, color, and flavor. Don't be afraid to experiment with unfamiliar vegetables, but plan to be able to use most of the vegetables you produce.

*Lynn Loughary is the Horticulture Agent for Wyandotte County, K-State Research and Extension. She can be reached by calling 913-299-9300, ext. 104 or by email*

*lloughar@ksu.edu*