

CROP ROTATION and GREEN MANURES

Crop rotation is vital to organic gardening. Crop rotation is the practice of changing the type of plants that are grown in a particular garden bed each year so that you avoid depleting the soil of the specific nutrients that a particular plant requires and so you prevent a build-up of weeds, disease and pests. Certain crops benefit the plants that grow in the same garden bed the following year, and some crops are a detriment to the plants that grow in the same garden bed the following year. By carefully arranging which crops will follow which crops, you can minimize the detrimental effects of some crops and increase the beneficial effect of other crops. This is a topic that requires much more description and information. If you would like more information on crop rotation and what our crop rotation system looks like, please let us know.

In addition to rotating crops, it is a very good idea to plant ?green manures? or ?cover crops? in your garden (either after the harvest of a vegetable is completed or by incorporating green manures into your crop rotation). Green manures are an assortment of plants that are very beneficial to the soil, and are planted strictly for the purpose of improving the soil for future crops to benefit from. Some of these plants deepen the accessible layer of soil by using long roots to loosen the soil. Some add a lot of organic matter to the soil, and others fix an enormous amount of Nitrogen in the soil. Many of these plants will also attract beneficial insects to your garden. We make two green manure ?blends? of seeds that provide our garden with all of the above benefits. (All of our green manure seeds are available at Peaceful Valley Farm Supply ? www.groworganic.com)

For beds that will be growing root crops the following year, we make a blend that will really loosen and deepen the soil. The recipe is:

Pre-Root Green Manure Blend:

- 4 parts Rape seed
- 3 parts Nitro-Persian Clover
- 3 parts Berseem Clover
- 2 parts White Cayuse Oats
- 2 parts Buckwheat

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For all other beds, we make a blend that focuses more on fixing nitrogen in the soil and adding organic matter. The recipe is:

Basic Green Manure Blend:

3 parts Nitro-Persian Clover

3 parts White Cayuse Oats

2 parts Berseem Clover

2 parts Buckwheat

2 parts Rape seed

1 part Foenugreek