

## Reduce vegetable pests with crop rotation

Dealing with pests is part of growing vegetables, but there are some easy things you can do to reduce pest problems in your vegetable crops. Crops within a plant family are often susceptible to the same disease, insect, mite and nematode pests. To avoid the persistence of pests in the garden from season to season, rotate crops from different plant families each planting season, within each planting area. This will help break up pest life cycles and reduce pest populations.

Crop rotation can be used for any scale of crop production, from home gardens to large commercial crop fields. For a home garden, a planting area may be a large container, a raised bed, or a section within a larger garden.

### Common Central Florida crops and their plant families:

Plant family Latin name	Cucurbitaceae	Convolvulaceae	Apiaceae	Poaceae	Amaryllidaceae	Asteraceae	Fabaceae	Solanaceae	Brassicaceae	Malvaceae	Amaranthaceae
Crops	Melon Squash Gourd Cucumber Chayote	Sweet Potato	Carrot Parsley Fennel Cilantro	Corn	Onion Chive	Lettuce	Bean Pea Peanut	Eggplant Tomatillo Potato Tomato Pepper	Turnip Mustard Kale Collards Cabbage Broccoli Cauliflower Radish Kohlrabi	Roselle Okra	Beet Spinach Chard

Although planning crop rotations can be quite complex for diverse vegetable production, rotating crop families each growing season is a simple strategy to implement. In Osceola County, FL our primary growing season is usually September-May, and if you grow summer crops, June-September.

### Sample crop rotation plan using select plant families:

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5
Within each area, you can plant multiple crops from a plant family.					
Growing season 1 crop families	Solanaceae	Brassicaceae & Asteraceae	Cucurbitaceae	Amaranthaceae & Apiaceae	Fabaceae
Growing season 2 crop families	Brassicaceae & Asteraceae	Cucurbitaceae	Amaranthaceae & Apiaceae	Fabaceae	Solanaceae
Growing season 3 crop families	Cucurbitaceae	Amaranthaceae & Apiaceae	Fabaceae	Solanaceae	Brassicaceae & Asteraceae

#### References:

Crop Rotation on Organic Farms, SARE: <http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books/Crop-Rotation-on-Organic-Farms>

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