

I am so excited because Jon and Jedidiah built two more raised vegetable beds for me, allowing me to plant more vegetables and companion flowers. The sad fact is that it still is not enough for my vision a vision of planting the south 40! But I am thankful for what I have.

I dearly love blues, purples, pinks, and yellows, so my color scheme for one of my vegetable beds included purple bush beans and yellow bush squash surrounded by Swiss chard rhubarb, pink radishes, May Night and Blue Hill salvias, coreopsis, campanula, chives, and purple and pink Wave petunias. Wow! What a marvelous combination for a gorgeous color scheme.

In my yellow, orange and red heirloom tomato and yellow, orange, and red pepper beds, I planted yellow, orange, and russet red marigolds, ganzias, calendulas, and nasturtiums and, of course, lots of herbs. These are not favorite flowers of mine, but they blend well with the color scheme of those beds while being the perfect companion flowers to deter harmful insects and welcome beneficial ones. We also add the flowers from the calendulas and nasturtiums to our salads.

Sonia and I read that the French strip off the lower leaves and suckers off their tomato plants so that they can grow lettuce around the base of their tomatoes. This not only helps shade the lettuce in the summer so it won't bolt, but also makes better use of their garden space. We tried this technique this year, and it has worked very well for us.

One of our favorite garden vegetables is fresh beans, so we continue to plant pole and bush beans throughout the summer so that we have a continual supply. Just this last week, we made four teepees in our garden bed made of 10-foot high bamboo stalks. Around the base of the bamboo, we planted pole beans, cucumbers, and morning glories. Between the legs of the teepees, we planted several different kinds of lettuce, which will be shaded from the hot summer sun.

I just pulled all our radishes out. These heirloom radishes were as big as turnips. As a matter of fact, Sonia told someone that we planted turnips because they certainly looked like them. These look lovely sliced in a salad, as they are pink, white and green inside.

Between our potatoes in the backyard, I will continue to plant bush beans. Our first planting of orange beets is almost mature enough to pick. Our second planting will be ready in about a month. And if we like this new variety, I will continue to plant more for late summer and early fall harvests.

style="mso-tab-count: 1">◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ </SPAN>If you have not planted your garden yet, do not be dismayed. You can plant lettuce (if it is shaded) and beans all summer, beets for late summer and fall harvest, carrots in mid July, and broccoli late in the summer for a fall crop. </SPAN>