

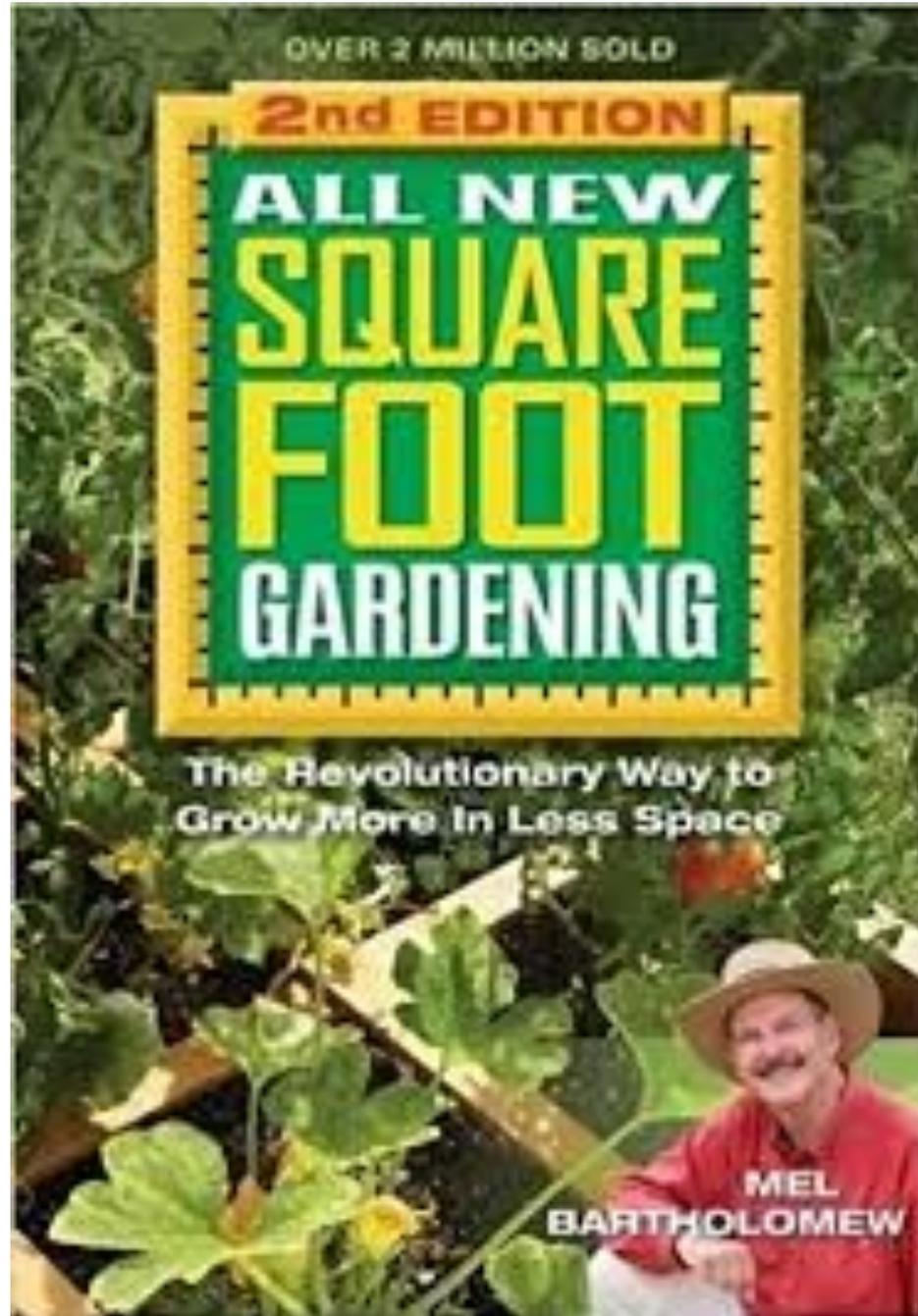
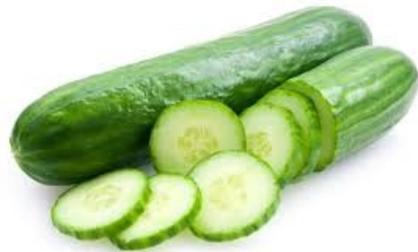


# Square Foot Gardening

Gardening geared to maximum production with minimum effort.

A method of gardening first introduced in a book by Mel Bartholomew in 1981. His second book with improvements was published in 2007. It has been used in gardens all over the world.

The book **ALL NEW SQUARE FOOT GARDENING** by Mel Bartholomew is available in most libraries.



A square foot garden:

Uses no soil

Requires little watering

Minimum weeding

Can produce up to 3 seasons of harvesting in an average climate



## **A Square Foot Garden will:**

Be a raised bed

Will be built in “blocks” of 1 foot square

Will only contain Mel’s Mix—no soil

Will have at least a 3 foot isle around it on all sides except those against a wall



## **A Square foot Garden will be more efficient:**

Less seed used

No down time—you can start planting as soon as you build your frame

No fertilizer (all you need is in Mel’s Mix)

Soil is not compressed so any weeds are easy to pull.

You can stagger your harvest so you can get product all season long.

Unlike row gardening, a square foot garden should be put in a place you will be viewing it often—like near the back door or near a patio.

Require no tools except a hand trowel and scissors.

## What is Square Foot Gardening? 3 Easy Steps



Build a Box



Fill with Mel's Mix



Add a Grid

Square Foot Gardening is a simple way to create easy to manage raised beds that require very little time maintaining them. Grow 100 % of the harvest in just 20% of the space with only 2% of the work. No weeding, heavy digging or tilling. Even beginners can produce their own food that is completely natural and organic in a limited amount of space.

## So how do I build it?

A Square Foot Garden consists of a square frame built of wood (2' X 6' boards work well) and a dissecting grid that will be placed in a sunny location where you will see it daily.

- The frame should be built of wood that has not been treated.
- The end boards can overlap or meet in any fashion as long as the frame is sturdy. Place the frame on the ground where your garden will be located.
- Your garden frame measurements should never be more than 2 feet deep.
- The average person cannot reach more than 2 feet so your frame needs to be in intervals of two. Examples: 4' x 4', 2' X 6', or 2' X any length.
- Remove grass and weeds from interior of frame.
- Roll a weed-barrier cloth all over the inside of your frame and secure to ground.
- Spread Mel's Mix across the interior in layers, gently watering between layers.

# Mel's Mix Ingredients



+



+



Ingredients are 1/3 of each:

Peat moss

Course grain Vermiculite

A mix of different kinds of compost



Continue to layer soil and water until 6 inches of soil is reached.

Prepare your grid. Using wooden lathes, lay out your grid in a lattice work pattern until you have covered your frame in 1 foot squares. ( for 4' X 4' you will have 16 squares).

Drill holes at the intersection of your grid and use nuts and bolts to secure the wood. Lay the completed grid on your frame and secure with wood screws.

You may paint your frame and grid for decorative purposes but make sure that no paint touches any planting surface.



## More About Mel's Mix

It contains retains moisture, drains perfectly, and has all the nutrients and trace minerals a plant could ever want.

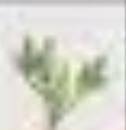
## Let's Start Planting!

### *Visualize the Harvest*

Each 1 foot square can be a different product.



# Square Foot Planting Guidelines

 Cilantro (4)	 Dill (1)	 Carrot (16)	 Hot Peppers (1)	 Herb (2)	 Kale (4)	 Nasturtium (4)	 Leaf Lettuce (16)	 Peas (8)	 Peppers (1)	 Pumpkin (2)	 Tomato (1)
 Cilantro (4)	 Parsley (2)	 Beans (8)	 Beans (8)	 Hot Chili (1)	 Green Squash (2)	 Cabbage (1)	 Cauliflower (1)	 Chives (1)	 Tomato (2)	 Cucumbers (2)	 Eggplant (1)
 Cilantro (4)	 Herb (2)	 Peas (8)	 Carrots (8)	 Pumpkin (4)	 Radishes (16)	 Rosemary (1)	 Pumpkin (1)	 Peppers (1)	 Sage (1)	 Herb (2)	 Arugula (16)
 Spinach (16)	 Butter Beans (1)	 Sweet Potatoes (1)	 Hot Chili (2)	 Thyme (2)	 Onions (16)	 Tomatoes (8)	 Winter Squash (1)	 Hot Chili (2)	 Lemon (1)	 Cilantro (2)	 Cilantro (2)

Here is a simple guideline to show how many of a product can be placed in to each of our one foot square boxes without crowding or overgrowing other plants.

## Dividing your squares

Each square foot in your SFG can grow one, four, nine or sixteen plants.

Take your finger and find the middle of your square. Create a small furrow with your finger and divide the square in to the number of products you will be planting in that square.

In the beginning plant only what your family will eat—like your grocery list. You don't buy two bags of radishes per week so stagger your plant growth to accommodate how you would use it.

Some vegetables may be grown from seed (a pinch in each hole) but some may take too long to germinate and produce during n your local growing season. Use transplants for these selections. Check your seed package germination times or consult the internet for this.

When to plant? A good rule of thumb is after the last Hard Frost date in your local area. You can consult your local agricultural extension office, the Old Farmer's Almanac or look up on the internet. Your local extension office in Madison County is (765) 641-9514



**Both the Old Farmers' Almanac and the National Weather service are predicting a last Frost Date of April 21 for 2018 In Madison County**

## What to plant and growing your product

You have made out your “grocery list” of vegetables normally used by your family and are ready to select varieties for your sfg garden. A good source of knowledge for plants to grow in your area is your extension agent. There are also many mail seed catalogs or transplants available from nurseries.

As seed plants appear in your garden, begin selecting the best in each planting hole. If you planted three radish seeds in one hole and all came up, choose the healthiest one and using your scissors, snip off the other two. Snipping off versus pulling up will keep the plant roots from being disturbed.

Keep a bucket near your sfg bed to collect rainwater. Water as needed. A cup can be left in the bucket to save some steps.

When your first crop is finished and you are ready to replant again, add more Mel’s Mix and reseed.



## What about vegetables with a longer root system?

Tomatoes and Carrots are good examples of plants with longer root systems.

You can remedy this using a “box on a box” approach. Simply build a 1 foot by 1 foot wood frame and put it on the square you are going to use for that product. Fill with Mel’s Mix and plant a usual. This will look like a pyramid affect but can be easily disassembled if you change your garden plan later.



## Vertical gardening

Why grow vertically?

You can grow crops that need a different kind of support (vines, tomatoes, cucumbers, summer squash)

It saves space.

How do you grow vertically?

Build a super strong steel frame with nylon netting



Where do you grow vertically?

Around the north edge of your 4 X 4 frame

When do you grow vertically?

Anytime before vine crops start sprawling

### How to construct a vertical support

Materials needed: electrical conduit, elbow connectors, rebar and Trellis netting.

The conduit (1/2 " diameter) comes in a 10' length (have store cut in to 2 5' foot lengths for you). Buy a second conduit pipe (1/2" in diameter) and have it cut to 4' . Buy 2 pieces of rebar. and 2 pre-bent rounded corners. At home hammer the rebar about 1/2 of its length in to the ground on the north side of the box. Slide the 5 foot conduit lengths over the rebar posts. Connect the 4' length of conduit between the two posts using the elbow connectors and tighten.



## Attaching the vertical frame netting

To attach the trellis netting to your frame, hook the netting on the two corners. Next cut the netting at each connection. This will give you one long strand.

Loop the long strand over the top of the frame and secure with a simple knot. Try to keep the length uniform so your netting isn't crooked.

Make the same cuts down the sides and tie firmly to the frame.

Your vertical frame will look neat and trim for many years.

**At least once a week, gently take the new growth on your vertical crops and carefully weave it in and out of the netting.**

