



Crop Rotation Basics

A vital element in your IPM strategies

by Emily Bishton, 2010

Why rotate crops?

Growing the same plant family year after year in the same garden bed can result in the buildup of diseases and garden pests, some of which can affect food crops for years to come.




Certain plant families are especially prone to soil-borne diseases if planted in the same place each year.

Solanaceae: Tomato, Pepper, Eggplant, Potato, etc.

These are susceptible to fungal blight diseases.



Brassica: Broccoli, Kale, Collards, Cauliflower, etc.

These are susceptible to club root fungus, which can last for 10+ years in the soil.





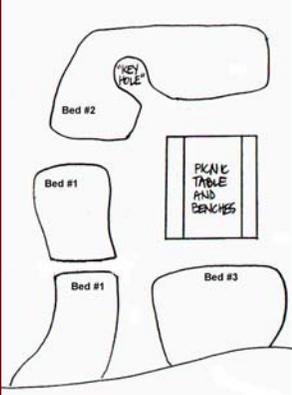
Allium Family: Onion, Garlic, Leeks, etc.

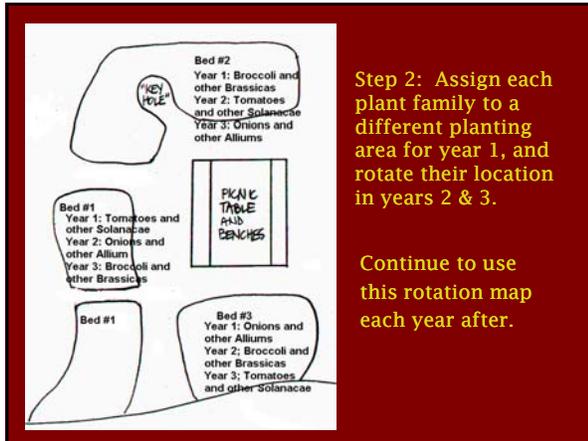
These are susceptible to bacterial soft rot and fungal rust diseases.



A 3-year rotation plan works best

Step 1: Make a simple base map of the garden that divides it into 3 planting areas, each of similar square footage.





Step 2: Assign each plant family to a different planting area for year 1, and rotate their location in years 2 & 3.

Continue to use this rotation map each year after.

Other plant families also benefit from crop rotation. As you get used to the process, include them in your rotation map.



↑ Cucurbit: Squash, Pumpkin, Cucumber

Goosefoot: ↑ Chard, Radish, Beets

Legume: ↑ Bean & Pea



← Umbel: Carrot & Parsley

Last but not least, remember to consider the plant family of the cover crops you choose. IE: crimson clover is a legume.

