

**SUCCESSFUL
ORGANIC
GARDENING**

**AT OCEAN VIEW FARMS
COMMUNITY GARDEN**



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Welcome

to Ocean View Farms Community Garden

Being an urban farmer will not only increase your love for fresh, homegrown food, but it will also re-connect you with the natural order of life threatened by hectic city living that renders us too busy, too stressed, too preoccupied to see or appreciate the color, fragrance and beauty that can abound in a simple garden plot.

Ocean View Farms requires its members to employ organic gardening practices. This holistic approach to agriculture will ensure that your food will be the healthiest that you can possibly harvest for yourself and family. The use of non-organic pesticides or fertilizer is prohibited at OVF. Failure to comply is cause for dismissal from the garden.

Every OVF member invests time and energy to reap the rewards of growing and enjoying organic foods, and it is important to realize that through the dynamics of natural run-off, synthetic pesticides or fertilizers in a single plot can severely contaminate the entire garden, permeating the soil with lingering poisons which end up in our food, and ultimately, our bodies.


What is Organic Gardening?

Simply defined, organic gardening works with nature's ecosystems to garden without the use of toxic and polluting chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

In nature, the cycle of growth, decay and death is continuous and has no need of chemical or synthetic additives. For example, a forest or a meadow can sustain itself for centuries without added synthetics in the soil to promote growth.

The same holistic approach can be reproduced in your OVF garden. By keeping your soil rich in organic matter (compost/manure), the life within your soil will continuously regenerate. Organic material in the earth is consumed by living organisms whose habitat is the soil. Their waste products invigorate the soil's health.

Getting Started



Ocean View Farms sits on an ancient sand dune, so the soil is unusually sandy and a joy to work in, but is in constant need of enrichment. Being close to the coast and the ocean breeze, it is consistently cool and comfortable, without ever getting cold. (We are in *Sunset's Zone 24*.) Because of OVF's organic gardening practices, the garden plot you inherit will probably have a decent overall soil structure. This is not to say, however, that you won't have to put in some back-breaking hard work. There are steps you'll need to take to get your soil up to snuff for your first planting.

Weeds

First, of course, you'll have to clear the weeds to which your plot has succumbed after a period of neglect. Many weeds can be beneficial to the soil, transposing minerals back into the earth. Others are not. Learn to recognize these weeds and get rid of them!

Keep after them. You'll find the following three perennials to be very persistent: Bermuda grass, false garlic and nutgrass.

Once the soil is turned over, kneel down, grab a handful and look at it. What do you see? Anything moving? Anything alive? Does it have a smell? If you can answer 'yes' to any of these your soil isn't too bad, but by adding more organic matter you can improve it even more.

Our OVF community has over 36 years of collective garden wisdom to share. Talk to your neighbors and attend OVF workshops to enhance your knowledge.

Soil

Our sandy soil needs improvement.

Adding organic matter helps retain moisture and adds nutrients. Use the community compost plus additional organic fertilizers such as blood meal, chicken manure, worm castings or other balanced organic fertilizers available locally. (Refer to the list on the OVF website.) The manure and compost available at OVF are excellent for growing all common garden vegetables. An important note: *Never put fresh manure on young plants or seedlings.* The nitrogen rich manure commonly classified as 'hot' will literally burn your new plant. Allow fresh manure to compost before using. You may take as much OVF manure or compost as needed.

Health 911

A tetanus inoculation is highly recommended for anyone working with soil, compost and manure. Be sure yours is up to date.

By adding organic matter to your soil you will:

- Supply nutrition to plants by making the soil a natural reserve of nutrients.
- Create better water drainage by loosening the soil structure and increasing water storage.
- Greatly improve aeration of the soil.
- Dramatically increase activity and numbers of soil micro-organisms and earthworms—the living machines of the soil.

One last, important step before planting

Spread a one to two inch layer of manure over your plot. Next, fill a wheelbarrow with black, rich compost and spread a couple of inches on top. Dig in these amendments with a spade, rake the bed out and water thoroughly. *Wait at least two weeks for weeds to sprout.* Hoe or pull these weeds. Many sprouting seeds naturally arise from compost, so you'll need to repeat this process each time you add compost to your plot. Turn over the soil once again and rake smooth. Now, you're ready to plant!

The Big Three Weeds

Devil Grass (or Bermuda grass) is the most common and the most difficult to eradicate. Its gnarled root systems travel deep and wide throughout the entire 6.5 acre garden. In all fairness, it's probably this pesky plant that's holding our beloved hillside together, preventing it from sliding into Centinela Avenue after a heavy rainfall. It spreads rapidly underground on white rhizomes and every bit must be dug out of the sod by hand. Hoeing will do no good; tilling the soil without removing this weed can be a disaster. **BERMUDA GRASS CAN GO IN THE COMMUNITY COMPOST.**

False Garlic looks like an onion or garlic, with narrow, grayish bulb foliage and small white flowers on stalks. Underground is a bulb and attached to it are many tiny corms. Dig out by hand and take some soil around the bulb as well, as the tiny corms may remain to sprout anew. **DO NOT PUT FALSE GARLIC IN THE COMPOST HEAP.** Put it in the dumpsters outside the garden in the upper parking lot.



Nutsedge (or nutgrass) looks like a pleated grass. It has a bulb, or nut, underground, and often another one even deeper than the first. It is very difficult to dig up all the nuts. If you can get most of it, and keep pulling off the tops as they appear, you can smother it. **DO NOT PUT NUTGRASS IN THE COMPOST PILE.** If you do, it, like false garlic, it may spread to other plots, maybe even returning to yours!



Learn to recognize false garlic and nutgrass and make sure they are not recycled through our compost.

What and When to Plant

Even though our climate in Southern California is favorable all year round, it is always best to plant crops in season. Vegetables will produce better when you stick to traditional growing patterns.

Late Spring & Summer

Beans, bush & pole (direct sow)
Corn (direct sow)
Cucumbers (direct sow or transplants)
Eggplant (transplants)
Melons, all types (direct sow or transplants)
Peppers (transplants)
Summer squash (direct sow or transplants)
Tomatoes (transplants)
Tomatillos (transplants)
Winter squash (direct sow or transplants)

Early Fall & Winter

Beets (direct sow)
Broccoli (transplants)
Brussels sprouts (transplants)
Cabbage (transplants)
Carrots (direct sow)
Cauliflower (transplants)
Celery (transplants)
Chard (direct sow or transplants)
Fava beans (direct sow)
Garlic (direct sow cloves)
Kohlrabi (direct sow)
Leeks (transplants)
Onions (sow sets)
Peas (direct sow)
Potatoes (sow pieces with eyes)
Radishes (direct sow)
Scallions (direct sow or transplants)
Spinach (direct sow)

Must-have Garden Tools

- A **garden trowel** and **hand fork**, handy for seeding, planting seedlings and weeding
- A **shovel** and **hoe** to dig out weeds, old plants, spread manure & compost
- A pair of **gardening gloves** and **rubber boots**
- A pair of **well-sharpened hand pruners**

From Seed to Harvest

What do F1 and OP mean?

Seed packets and catalogs generally include the term "F1" or "OP" in their plant description. Use seeds identified as "OP" if you want to save the plant's seeds to sow in the future.

F1 hybrids are created by taking the pollen from the male parts of one pure, inbred plant and transferring it to the female parts of a different plant. The breeder crosses different plant strains to produce hybrid, or F1 offspring, that possess improved yield, earliness, cold or heat tolerance, disease resistance, flavor, nutrition, vigor or other traits. Seeds from F1 hybrids usually will not breed true for future crops. You need to buy fresh hybrid seed or starter plants from a reputable seed house or nursery every season if you want plants that resemble the F1 plants that you previously grew.

Varieties labeled "OP" (open pollinated) will grow true to variety from seeds produced by the plants you grow. These seeds may be saved and will produce the same plant in future sowings as long as proper seed-saving procedures are followed. Both F1 hybrids and OP varieties can be considered "heirloom." These varieties have been around for a long time, and often were home garden favorites prior to 1945.

Safe Seed Pledge You can buy seeds in local stores, but a greater variety is available online and through mail order catalogs. Many seed houses that sell to the home market have signed the Safe Seed Pledge, which pledges that the company does not knowingly buy or sell genetically engineered seeds or plants.

Direct seeding in the ground is fine for some seeds. Lay out your rows with string and follow spacing suggestions on the seed packet. Protect tasty seedlings from birds with gauze or plastic cups (with air holes so they don't bake!) until they are germinated. Thin according to packet instructions.

Sowing seeds indoors can give you a jump on the growing season. Start in pots or trays in a sunny window. Tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cabbage, broccoli, brussels sprouts, marigolds and sweet peas can be started this way. When the plants are 2"-3" high, transplant outdoors.

Rotate crops. Certain plants such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and potatoes should be grown in different locations each year to reduce the risk of new plantings succumbing to soil borne diseases.

Create raised beds or mulched pathways between your growing areas. Mulching paths around plants keeps you from getting muddy, discourages weeds, and keeps soil from evaporating. Use trellises and cages to support beans, peas, tomatoes and cucumbers.

Note: Place trellises and tall plants no closer than two feet from your plot boundaries to prevent shading your neighbor's garden.