

# **Get your Garden Started Worksheets**

**From Little House in the Suburbs.com**

Welcome! We hope that these worksheets help get you off to a good start with your new garden! Let's get right to it.

### **WHERE to plant?**

An ideal spot has enough sun, is close enough to the house that you can casually putter in it without changing out of your robe, and is *near* a water supply. If you have to haul out 50 feet of hose every time you need to water, you'll start hating your garden within the month.

Below, draw or describe the shade/sun in your prospective spots at 9AM, noon, and 3PM.

**9AM**

**NOON**

**3PM**

Did you find a spot with at least six hours of good sun?

Get out your tape measure. How big is your sunny spot(s)?

Measurements \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

Measurements \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

Measurements \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

How far away is it from the house? Will you hike out there a hundred times this summer?

How far is it from a water supply? Hauling hoses much?

What's the traffic like for kids, pets, and wildlife? What kind of defenses will it need against deer, dogs, or toddlers?

Anything else you might consider?

### Choose Your Gardening Level

1. Is your area of sun itty-bitty?
2. Does your one patch of sun move all over your yard?
3. Are you feeling a wee bit chicken and want to start really small?
4. Are you going to have to carry water out to your patch of sun by hand?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, then we recommend a container garden. If you are following along in our book, you will be working from *Little House in the Suburbs*, pages 31-36 for the Level 1 Container Gardening section\*.

5. Do you have at least a 6x6ft area that receives good sun 6 hours a day?
6. Do you have a ready-made supply of compost or are you prepared to spend ~\$40 to fill each 4x4 raised bed?
7. Can you quickly and easily reach all parts of your area with a hose and watering wand?
8. Are you interested in getting the most produce out of every square foot of your area?

If you answered “yes” to all of the above questions, then we recommend a raised bed garden for you. If you are following along in our book, you will be working mostly from *Little House in the Suburbs*, pages 36-42 for the Level 2 Raised Bed Garden\*.

9. Do you have a large area available?
10. Are you interested in getting the most produce per plant, even though it will eat up more square footage than a raised bed garden?
11. Is it really too large to water and weed by hand?
12. Do you have access to a tiller and pickup truck?
13. Are you willing to sacrifice some square footage to have something that you can weed by machine?

If you answered “yes” to all of the above questions, then you may be up for a row garden. If you are following along in our book, work from *Little House in the Suburbs*, pages 42-47 for the Level 3 Row Gardening\*.

This year, I plan to start a \_\_\_\_\_ garden in my yard!

\*If you aren't working from our book, and are instead using the mini-courses in the website sidebar, go to [Step #1](#) and read the links provided. Even if you are going to do a row garden or a container garden, the information in those raised bed plans will be helpful.

## Garden Design

Find North. Draw your garden area(s) below, with measurements, North at the top.

- If you are container gardening, draw your patios and pots.
- If you are raised bed gardening, try dividing up the area different ways to maximize your output. At least one dimension of your raised bed should be 4ft, so you can each across it, but it can be 20 ft long if you like. Leave at least 2ft paths.
- If you are row gardening, come in 2ft for your first rows and columns around all sides to give you a border between your garden and the grass. Then, divide it into 4ft rows and columns from there.

Now, just hang onto this sheet for a few pages. We're going to run off into some other topics, but these dimensions need to be in your head while you work through the next few sections.

If you are using one or more of our beginner garden plans (*LHITS* 42, 44, 231, 233) you can skip page 6, 8, and 9 of this workbook. If you don't have the book, some can be found [here](#).

## WHAT to Plant

What plants do you like to eat?

1. Read your section of the book. What plants are easiest to grow in your type of garden? Circle them on your list.
2. What plants did we mention that have a really poor yield in your type of garden or are space hogs? Mark them out.
3. Find out your zone. We like to use [Burpee](#). Now go type in each of the plants you have left. See if they grow in your area. Mark out those that don't.
4. Find out your local independently owned garden store or nursery. Call and ask the person who answers what the best, easiest plants are for your area. Star those on your list.
5. If you have something you really want to grow and we haven't mentioned it, say something to your nursery guy during this phone call and see what he says.
6. If you have lots of perennials on your list, check out our mini-course [Step #3](#) for what to do with those plants. Let's keep this spot just for annuals.

So what's left?

**WHEN to Plant**

Go to [THIS](#) site and find your last and first frost dates. Put these dates in the “FROST” row on 222 and 225 in *Little House in the Suburbs* or print out [THIS GUIDE](#). Work backwards and forwards by weeks. You now have a guide that tells you what date to plant everything for your area.

What plants on your list is it already too late for?

What plants on your list is it way too early for?

What plants on your list is it almost time for?

(Row Gardeners Only) Is your spot NEW? Even though you’ve tilled, your first year you are going to have BIG TIME WEEDS if you plant in the spring. Wait until the grass comes up and kill it, till it again, THEN plant. So what plants do you need to hold off on till Fall?

## Plant Planning Sheets

List the shoulder-high/head-high plants that you would like to grow (corn, tomato in cages, cucumbers or pole beans on tall trellises, okra)

List the knee-high plants you like to grow (peppers, bush beans, leeks, basil)

List the ankle/shin plants you like to grow (onions, radishes, carrots, spinach, lettuce)

Get back out your garden design sheet from page 5 of this workbook. Sketch tall plants at the top (North), knee-highs in the middle, and shin-highs in the front.

Whether you're doing containers, one or more raised beds, or row gardening, this is your basic layout. Now it's just a matter of how many of each you want and how close you can put them.



## Distances and Decisions

Now it's time to get down to details. How much of each plant is going in the ground, and where? Use the below directions to make your detailed plan on page 10.

For raised bed and container folks:

- Everything that's going on a trellis or a big stake needs to be in the back. Figure at least one square foot for each large plant.
- Next come your bell peppers, basil, and other knee highs. Same spacing. Your peppers might need a little support, but not BIG support like the tomatoes and pole beans.
- In the almost front, put your greens and bush beans 4-9 per square foot depending.
- In the very front squares or pots, put your onions, little radishes, and other shorties. Generally, you can put 16 per square foot.

For row gardeners, you will have sections at the front and back where you can only till the rows. In the middle, you will also be able to till the columns. The references to no-till or yes-till are in reference to the columns. You can always till the footpaths.

- No-till biggies go at the back. If you're trying corn, you have to plant at least two rows with 2-3 feet between the rows for pollination. I usually put the cukes and other trellis vines in the next row, each plant 4ft from the next. And since I use cattle panel for trellis (hence the need for the pickup truck), I won't be tilling in between those plants either one the season gets going.
- Totally tillable comes next. This is your tomato cages in back, then big zucchini plants, pepper plants, basil, and other non-viney crops. You can put some plants closer than 4 feet apart on 4 foot rows, but it sure makes tilling easy if they're all the same distance.
- Shorty-non-tillable comes next. These are bush beans and greens. Things that you can plant really close together. I usually treat them like one long foot wide raised bed. I plant bush beans the length of the row, 3 across, 3-4 inches apart. Same idea with chard or other greens.
- Super-shorties, no till. I also treat these like one long raised bed. Put about four across, 2-inches apart for onions, carrots, radishes, lettuce and the like
- Crazy crops. I put butternut, watermelon, pumpkin and the like on the corners or the edges, or even the front or back row so I can direct them out across the yard and away from the rich dirt. They're short enough to not really shade anybody as long as you keep them from choking their friends.

**MY GARDEN PLAN**

Draw it out in detail below. (You may need to print out a few of this page before you get it just right.) After you have the detailed plan ready, go back to your planting calendar guide and write on your plan what week you need to get them in the ground and whether it's seed or transplant. Call your nursery guy back if you have questions. I do.

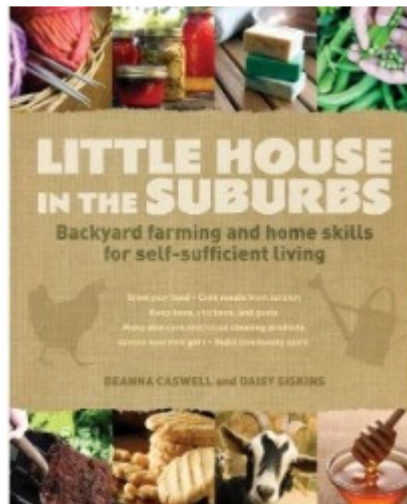
## Congratulations!!!!

You've really done the hardest part. Now you just have to go sweat!

Put all of your work in a binder for next year. Keep records of what you're doing in your garden with the journal pages on pages 246-249 of *Little House in the Suburbs* or you can download others at our site here.

If you feel like getting fancy and learning about lasagna gardening, companion planting, DIY mixes and solutions, seed starting indoors, and the like, be sure to check out our other mini-courses coming soon. For now, go check out [Step #2](#) and [Step #3](#) in our beginner gardening mini-course.

And don't forget to check out our book!



[Available at Amazon](#), and on [Kindle](#)  
[Barnes and Noble](#), and on [Nook](#)