

Vegetable Garden Spacing Chart

Vegetable	Plant Spacing	Row Spacing	Growth Habit	What You Need to Know
Tomatoes	24-36 inches	36-48 inches	Sprawling or upright	Bush types at 24", vining types at 36". Always cage or stake for better airflow.
Peppers	18-24 inches	24-36 inches	Compact and bushy	Sweet peppers at 18", heavy bell peppers at 24" for better support.
Cucumbers	12-18 inches	48-60 inches	Vining or bush	Vining need 18" and love trellises. Bush varieties stay tight at 12".
Lettuce	6-10 inches	12-18 inches	Low growing rosette	Leaf lettuce at 6" for repeat cuts. Head lettuce needs 10" to form properly.
Carrots	2-4 inches	12-18 inches	Underground root	Sow thick, thin once seedlings hit 2". Crowding = twisted roots.
Beans (Bush)	4-6 inches	18-24 inches	Compact bush	Plant at 4" for steady harvests. No support needed.
Beans (Pole)	6-8 inches	30-36 inches	Climbing to 6+ feet	Must have poles or trellises. Plant around supports.
Squash (Summer)	24-36 inches	48-60 inches	Sprawling bush	Zucchini spreads 3-4 feet but produces like crazy.
Squash (Winter)	36-48 inches	60-72 inches	Long rambling vines	Butternut and pumpkin vines run 10-15 feet. Plant at edges.
Broccoli	18-24 inches	24-36 inches	Upright with wide leaves	Crowding = tiny heads and disease problems.
Onions	4-6 inches	12-18 inches	Vertical bulb	Closer = smaller bulbs. Go wide for storage onions.
Radishes	2-3 inches	6-12 inches	Fast root crop	Ready in 3-4 weeks. Thin early or you get all leaves.
Spinach	3-6 inches	12-18 inches	Low leaf rosette	Baby greens at 3", full leaves at 6".
Kale	12-18 inches	18-24 inches	Tall and bushy	Gets huge. Needs airflow to avoid aphids.

What These Numbers Actually Mean?

Plant spacing is center-to-center between individual plants. It gives each one enough root room and leaf space without crowding.

Row spacing is the distance between row centers. It accounts for walking room, reaching in to weed, and letting foliage spread naturally.

Get spacing wrong and plants either choke each other out fighting for resources, or you waste space growing weeds instead of food. These numbers hit the sweet spot.

Spacing by Garden Type

Your garden layout completely changes how you space plants. What works in rows won't work in raised beds, and square foot gardens play by their own rules entirely.

1. Row Garden Spacing

Traditional rows need more space because you're walking between them.

Between Rows: You need 18" for tight crops like carrots, up to 72" for sprawling squash. Why so much? You're creating walking paths. You need room to kneel, use a hoe, harvest without stepping on plants, and let leaves spread without touching the next row. Most common vegetables do fine with 24-36" between rows. Save the super wide spacing for vining crops that take over.

Between Plants: Follow the chart spacing within each row. Tomatoes 24-36" apart down the line, peppers 18-24", lettuce 6-10". You're building corridors of plants separated by corridors of path space. Uses more square footage, but you can reach everything easily.

2. Raised Bed Spacing

No walking on the soil means way tighter spacing works beautifully.

Closer Spacing Rules: Cut your spacing by 25-50% compared to rows. Tomatoes that need 36" row spacing? Plant them 24" apart in all directions in a raised bed. Lettuce goes from 12" rows to 8" grids. This works because you never compact the soil by stepping on it. Roots spread easily in every direction. Plant in blocks and grids instead of rows. Create a dense canopy where mature leaves barely touch. You're using every inch.

3. Square Foot Garden Spacing

The grid tells you exactly where everything goes.

Plants Per Square: Divide your bed into 1-foot squares. Then follow these rules:

- 1 per square: Tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, cabbage, eggplant
- 4 per square: Lettuce, chard, herbs (2x2 pattern, 6" apart)
- 9 per square: Bush beans, beets, spinach, large onions (3x3 grid, 4" apart)
- 16 per square: Radishes, carrots, green onions (4x4 pattern, 3" apart)

Zero guesswork. A 4x4 bed holds 1 tomato, 4 peppers, 4 lettuce heads, 9 bush beans, 16 carrots, 16 radishes, plus herbs. That's massive diversity in 16 square feet.

Exceptions for Vining Crops: Cucumbers, pole beans, and peas get 1 per square but grow UP on trellises instead of spreading out. One square at ground level, 6 feet of vertical space. Genius.