

Who's Your Buddy – Vegetable Families

Crop rotation is the key to vegetable gardening success. Preventing overwintering pests and fungal infections (70% of all non-insect related issues) is vitally important to the annual health of garden soils and therefore garden plants.

But this means more than just choosing different vegetables to grow in the 3-4-year rotation schedule. Each family has its own set of bug-a-boos. So, it means growing different vegetable *families*.

Families are scientifically classified groups of plants that share growth habits, nutrient needs and susceptibility to pests and diseases.

This chart will not contain every vegetable known to man, but rather the most popular ones grown in our area of the USA.

Nightshade Family – an economically important family containing the most frequently grown vegetables.

- Tomatoes
- Potatoes
- Sweet peppers
- Chili peppers
- Eggplant
- Tomatillos

Mustard Family – also known as the cabbage family.

- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Kale
- Brussels sprouts
- Kohlrabi
- Turnip
- Radish
- Arugula
- Bok Choy
- Watercress
- Collard greens
- Horseradish
- Mustard greens

Legume Family – the 3rd largest plant family on Earth. Members can fix nitrogen from the air into the soil, enriching the soil, making them valuable cover crops. Legumes are the most protein-rich vegetable foods.

- Garden peas
- Snap peas
- Snow peas
- Green beans
- Runner beans
- Fava beans
- Soybeans
- Lentils
- Chickpeas
- Black-eyed peas
- Lima beans
- Edamame

Gourd Family – a large tropical and subtropical family with climbing or sprawling vines.

- Cucumber
- Zucchini
- Summer squash
- Winter squash
- Pumpkin
- Butternut squash
- Acorn squash
- Spaghetti squash
- Melon
- Watermelon
- Wax gourd

Grass Family – Most economically valuable family because it includes the grain crops.

- Sweet corn
- Bamboo shoots
- Sugarcane
- Lemongrass

Amaranth Family – includes many cool-season leafy vegetables and root crops.

- Spinach
- Swiss chard
- Beet
- Sugar beet
- Quinoa

Carrot Family – also known as the parsley family, includes a wide range of edible roots, stems, leaves and seeds that are used as vegetables and herbs.

- Carrot
- Parsnip
- Celery
- Celeriac
- Fennel
- Parsley
- Lovage
- Angelica
- Chervil

Daisy Family – The largest flowering plant family in the world, it includes many important vegetables.

- Lettuce
- Endive
- Chicory
- Radicchio
- Escarole
- Globe artichoke
- Jerusalem artichoke
- Dandelion
- Sunflower

Onion Family – Group most used for cooking.

- Onion
- Garlic
- Leek
- Shallot
- Chives
- Scallion

Morning Glory Family – a tropical family characterized by twining or trailing vines.

- Sweet potato

Yam Family – a group of climbing plants that produce starchy underground tubers frequently confused with sweet potatoes.

- White, yellow or purple yam

Mallow Family

- Okra

Mint Family – an important herb and aromatic family producing essential oils

- Basil
- Thai basil
- Mint
- Spearmint
- Peppermint
- Oregano
- Marjoram
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Savory
- Lemon balm

Buckwheat Family – contains leafy and root vegetables

- Rhubarb
- Sorrel

Asparagus Family

- Asparagus

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