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## Making a Salsa Garden

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If you aren't sure where to start when planning a home vegetable garden, a theme can make things easier. There are many suggestions for themed gardens, from specific dishes like salsa, to gardens from literature or art, and sensory or alphabet gardens.

Salsa Gardens contain plants typically used in making salsa this includes:

- **TOMATOES:** Roma or Paste tomatoes are recommended; Pony Express, Plum Crimson, and Plum Regal grow well in Kentucky. San Marzano tomatoes are another recommended variety that grows well in Kentucky. For more information, see Tomatoes (KYSU-CEP-FAC-0014).
- **PEPPERS:** A number of varieties of Jalapeno, Anaheim, and habaneros grow well in Kentucky. If planting peppers with high Scoville units, like habaneros, be sure to wear gloves when handling. Bell peppers can provide some color to salsa. For more information, see Peppers (KYSU-CEP-FAC-0017).
- **ONIONS:** Bulb onions are best planted much earlier than then tomatoes and peppers. Green onions or scallions can be used and take less time to reach maturity, so you can get multiple harvest. Additional fact sheets on Onions (KYSU-CEP-FAC-0013) and Green Onions (KYSU-CEP-FAC-0016) are available.
- **GARLIC:** Garlic should be planted the fall before you plan to harvest and take all season to grow. It usually won't be ready with the tomatoes and peppers, which is probably when you are going to make your salsa. For more information, see Garlic (KYSU-CEP-FAC-0015).
- **CILANTRO:** Cilantro is an annual herb that tends to bolt in the heat of summer, but grows well in containers and indoors. Additional fact sheets on



Growing Herbs in Containers (KYSU-CEP-FAC-0004) and Harvesting and Using Herbs (KYSU-CEP-FAC-0005) are available.

- Other herbs can include basil, oregano, parsley and mint.

## The Garden Layout

How you lay out the garden will depend on your space and the amount of room you have available, but there are a few things to keep in mind.

- Tomatoes are best started from transplants. They will need more space per plant than the other crops, 24 inches between plants or 1 plant per 9 square feet. Tomatoes will also require staking or tomato cages.
- Peppers are also best started from transplants. They should be spaced 14-18 inches apart, or 1 plant per square foot.
- Onions require only 4 inches between them, or you can plant 16 per square foot.
- Garlic should be planted 6 inches apart, about 4 plants per square foot.
- The herbs should be planted about 12 inches apart or 1 plant per square foot.
- These plants make good companions for each other. Basil enhances the growth of both tomatoes and peppers. Tomatoes grow well with onions and garlic, in fact, garlic planted between tomatoes will keep away red spider mites. Cilantro, also known as coriander deters spider mites and aphids and the shade of the tomatoes may keep it from bolting.
- Basil also keeps flies and mosquitos away, making your garden a more pleasant space to spend time.
- Planting flowers nearby can attract pollinators and improve your tomato and pepper harvest.



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