

# PLANTING TREES AND VEGETABLE GARDENS

Making this garden will make our house look better

When these vegetables grow we'll save some money

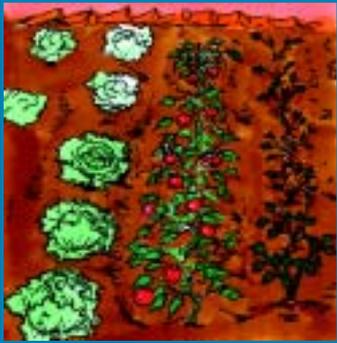


**HOAP**

HOME OWNERS' ADVICE PAMPHLETS



## PLANTING A GARDEN



Planting a garden can improve your living environment and does not have to cost very much. Landscaping your site means planning how and where to plant trees, shrubs, herbs and vegetables. Gardening is easy if you prepare and plan carefully.

You can plant trees and shrubs as a barrier outside doors, windows and around open spaces to protect your house from cold wind, rain, sun and blowing sand. Deciduous trees lose their leaves so they can let sunlight into the house in winter, and they provide shade and shelter from wind in summer.

Trees and shrubs also protect the site from soil erosion (blowing or washing away) and dust. They also screen your property from neighbours.

Vegetables need lots of attention so choosing the right site for a vegetable garden is very important.

Protect your garden from wind and animals (you may need fencing for this). Plant the garden in a sunny place near your house so you can look after it easily.

## PLAN BEFORE YOU START



Before you begin you will have to think carefully about a few things:

### 1. What kind of soil do you have on your site?

- Sandy - white or yellow and feels rough like sugar between your fingers. Sandy soils are not very fertile and can dry out very quickly.
- Clay – feels like powder when dry and crushed and sticky when wet. Clay soils are usually not fertile and very hard when dry.
- Loam – feels like a mix between sandy and clay soils. Loam is usually more fertile and holds water well.

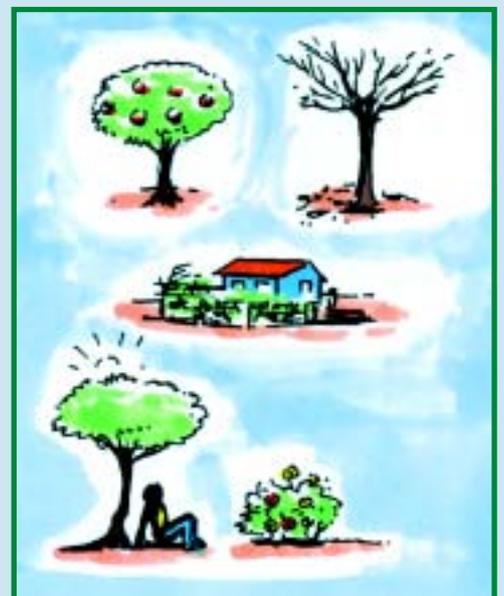
### 2. What is the climate in your area?

If you have not been in the area long, ask your neighbours.

- When is it most dry?  
This is when you will have to water your plants the most.
- When does the wind blow?  
How strong is it, and from what direction does it come?  
Where does the sun rise and set? This will tell you where to plant your garden.

### 3. Look carefully at your site.

What areas do you need to leave open for a driveway or washing areas.



# THE MOST IMPORTANT ADVICE IS

- Trees and shrubs need water once a week during the dry season.
- Make sure trees are well supported for the first year of growth.
- Vegetables and herbs need water every day in the dry season.
- Keep soil well mulched.
- Add compost for every new planting.
- Remove weeds and sick plants.



## IMPROVING YOUR SOIL

### Use the following to improve your soil:

- **Mulch**

In nature you find soil covered with dry, dead leaves and grass (mulch). It keeps the soil in place and protects it from the sun. It also keeps the moisture in the soil. You need the same protection for your garden. Collect as much dry leaves and grass as possible, and spread it thickly over your plants.

- **Compost or old manure (chicken, kraal or horse)**

This helps plants to grow healthy and fast. It helps loosen clay soils and it helps sandy soils to keep water. If the manure is fresh mix it with some mulch. Compost is the answer to most soil problems.

- **Water**

Plants grow best in well-watered soil. Give enough water so that the water sinks deeply into the soil. You can use dishwater or washing water from your house.

# STEP BY STEP PLANTING

## TREES AND SHRUBS

There are many different trees and shrubs in South Africa and many people know how to grow and use them. Usually the best ones are indigenous (local) varieties as they are used to the local soil and climate. These plants often do not need a lot of water. You can get plants from local nurseries, community organisations, friends and neighbours and in Arbor Week when plants are distributed for greening projects. Talk to your local community representatives for information on this.

1. Dig a hole for your tree or shrub – for big (older plants) make the hole knee deep and half a spade wide. For smaller (younger) plants make it about 4 times the size of the root bag.
2. Fill half the hole with compost or old manure, and the rest with soil. Mix well. Leave enough space for the plant roots.
3. Remove the tree from its bag and gently loosen the roots.
4. Plant it in the centre of the hole deep enough so the roots are well covered.
5. Gently pack the soil around the roots and make a small dam or bowl shape around the tree – this will help with watering.
6. Support and tie the plant to a pole.
7. Cover the area with mulch and water well.



## VEGETABLES AND HERBS

1. Remove all grass and weeds from the planting area.
2. Spread a thick layer of compost or manure – a layer at least as thick as your arm – more if you can.
3. With your garden fork turn the compost into the soil a bit deeper than the teeth of your garden fork.
4. Make the area level and smooth.
5. Water it well before you plant.
6. Cover with a thick layer of mulch.
7. Make gaps in the mulch and plant seeds or seedlings.
8. Water carefully every day.

### TIPS:

- plant herbs amongst your vegetables – these help protect them from insects and pests
- water plants regularly – early morning is best
- always improve soil by adding compost or old manure with every new planting
- keep soil well covered with mulch
- remove weeds before they flower and make new seeds.



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