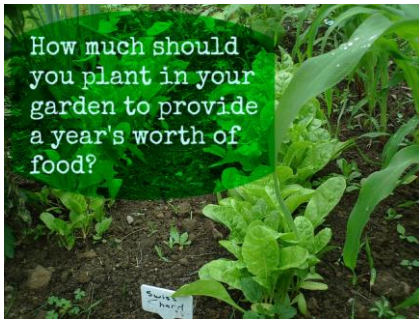


How much should you plant to provide a year's worth of food?

by BRENDA on APRIL 1, 2013 [Wellfed Homestead Blog](#)



Do you know how much your family eats in a year's time? As a farmer's wife, I am keenly aware of how much meat, poultry, eggs, honey and dairy we consume. Raising enough food to meet our own needs, as well as an abundance to sell is an integral part of our life. To be honest, it hasn't been the same with vegetables.

I've at least attempted a garden most of the years that we have been married. Some years, I was more successful than others. If I didn't grow it, I bought some produce from local farmers and preserved some foods for the winter: salsa, canned tomatoes, strawberry jam, pickles, and lots of frozen veggies and fruit. Still, I've always depended on going *grocery shopping*. I've never preserved *everything* that we needed for the winter, nor have I ever grown enough to meet all of our family's needs.

Not long ago, people *had to* think about how much to grow for the year. They *had to* plan ahead, save seeds, plant enough for their family, preserve enough, etc. It wasn't just a hobby. It didn't take up a 4 foot by 4 foot square in their backyard, next to the beautifully fertilized lawn. It *was their yard*.

It didn't take a back burner in their spring and summer plans, after camping trips, barbecues and swimming parties. These are all good things, but people had to think about *survival* first and foremost. Partying came after the harvest. Now days, most of us party first, fertilize our lawns second, go to the grocery store and depend on *other people* to grow our food (and expect it to be cheap), and then we think about gardening, maybe, if ever, as a hobby.

I loved Joel Salatin's talk @ [The Healthy Life Summit](#). This quote got me thinking:

"Everybody is a part of agriculture whether you want to be or not."

We're all a part of agriculture. Even if our part is just being a consumer, getting spinach and rice at the grocery store, we would not survive without agriculture. I, personally, want to be more involved than that. I want to *know* how much my family eats and how much we need to grow to supply that need. I want to work towards the goal of a completely self-sustaining homestead.

With that in mind, recently, I have been curious about exactly *how much* my family eats in a year. I started looking through a gardening book that used to belong to my Great Grandmother. That book plus these two main resources were used to compile my list:

[Sunset's Vegetable Garden Book \(from 1944\)](#)

[The Gardener's A-Z Guide to Growing Organic Food](#)

Want to know how much to grow in your garden? Here's what I found:

Artichokes 1-4 plants per person
Asparagus 10-12 plants per person
Beans, Bush 10-20 plants per person
Beans, Lima 10-20 plants per person
Beans, Pole 10-20 plants per person
Beets 10-20 plants per person
Broccoli 5-10 plants per person
Brussels Sprouts 2-8 plants per person
Cabbage 3-10 plants per person
Carrots 10-40 plants per person
Cauliflower 3-5 plants per person
Celeriac 1-5 plants per person
Celery 3-8 plants per person
Corn 12-40 plants per person
Cucumbers 3-5 plants per person
Eggplant 1 plant per person, plus 2-3 extra per family
Kale 1 5' row per person
Lettuce 10-12 plants per person
Melons 2-6 plants per person
Onions 40-80 plants per person
Peas 25-60 plants per person
Peppers 5-6 plants per person
Potatoes 10-30 plants per person
Pumpkins 1 plant per person
Rhubarb 2-3 crowns per person
Spinach 10-20 plants per person
Summer Squash 2-4 plants per person
Winter Squash 2 plants per person
Sweet Potatoes 5 plants per person
Tomatoes 2-5 plants per person

Obviously, all of this will vary based on your family's size, tastes, allergies and climate. If you're on the GAPS Diet, you'll obviously plant more squash and leafy greens, and no corn, potatoes or sweet potatoes. If you can grow some of these vegetables year-round, you will be able to grow smaller rows. If you're doing [Square Foot Gardening](#), you may be able to plant things closer together & thus take up less space in your garden. Never the less, I believe that we all ought to be considering how much we use in a year and how much needs to be grown to supply our family's needs (whether we are the ones doing the growing or not).