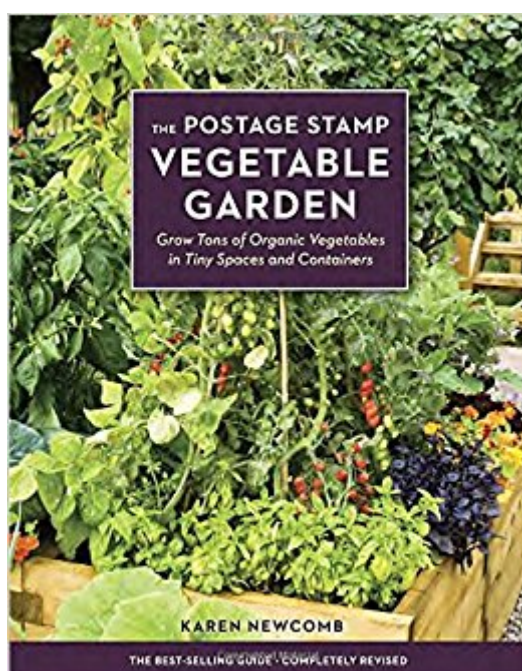


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# The Postage Stamp Vegetable Garden: Grow Tons Of Organic Vegetables In Tiny Spaces And Containers



## Synopsis

One of the best books for beginning and experienced vegetable gardeners, this clear, straightforward, easy-to-read gardening bestseller (over 500,000 copies sold) uses organic, biodynamic methods to produce large amounts of vegetables in very small spaces. To accommodate today's lifestyles, a garden needs to fit easily into a very small plot, take as little time as possible to maintain, require a minimum amount of water, and still produce prolifically. That's exactly what a postage stamp garden does. Postage stamp gardens are as little as 4 by 4 feet, and, after the initial soil preparation, they require very little extra work to produce a tremendous amount of vegetables--for instance, a 5-by-5-foot bed will produce a minimum of 200 pounds of vegetables. When first published 40 years ago, the postage stamp techniques, including closely planted beds rather than rows, vines and trailing plants grown vertically to free up space, and intercropping, were groundbreaking. Revised for an all new generation of gardeners, this edition includes brand new information on the variety of heirloom vegetables available today and how to grow them the postage stamp way. Now, in an ever busier world, the postage stamp intensive gardening method continues to be invaluable for gardeners who wish to weed, water, and work a whole lot less yet produce so much more.

## Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Ten Speed Press (February 17, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1607746832

ISBN-13: 978-1607746836

Product Dimensions: 6.9 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 86 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #315,571 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #45 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > By Technique > Urban #76 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > By Technique > Container Gardening #77 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > Fruit

## Customer Reviews

Karen Newcomb has contributed to and co-written eight gardening books with her late husband, Duane. She is a lifetime vegetable gardener, a garden blogger, and avid writer, and has been a

writing teacher for more than twenty years. She lives in Rocklin, California.

Introduction It's a beautiful day. There's not a cloud in the sky. The temperature is in the mid-80s. And there you are in your backyard, picking loads of vegetables from your own small garden tucked away in the corner of your property. Tomatoes, onions, corn, beans, you've grown them all—in fact, more than you ever dreamed possible from such a small space. Impossible? Of course not. That's exactly what a postage stamp garden is intended to do and what you will learn to do in the next several chapters. The techniques outlined here allow you to double or triple the quantities of vegetables you might normally grow in any given space. The history of this incredible gardening system began in the 1890s. Outside Paris, a few enterprising Frenchmen began raising crops using a new method they discovered. Over their land they spread an 18-inch layer of manure (plentiful in the day of the horse and buggy) and planted their vegetables so close together in this rich material that the leaves touched one another as the plants grew. Under this carpet of leaves, the ground remained moist, warm, and vigorous. During periods of frost, they set glass jars over the tiny plants to give them an early start. So good were the Frenchmen in devising fresh ways of growing things that they were able to produce nine crops a year. Such was the birth of the French Intensive method of gardening, an early form of what we now call intensive, or wide-row, gardening. In the following two decades, another organic gardening movement developed. In Switzerland, a remarkable philosopher from Austria, Rudolf Steiner, and his followers invented a gardening method called biodynamic. They emphasized the exclusive and balanced use of organic fertilizers—composted leaves, grass, manure, and so on. They investigated what is now called companion planting and found that certain plants, when grown together (like beans and cabbages), do better than others (like beans and onions). They also sought new ways of arranging crops. These biodynamic gardeners hit upon the idea of planting in mounded beds that permitted adequate drainage and that were narrow enough so that a person didn't have to walk over them. Between the 1930s and the 1960s, an Englishman, Alan Chadwick, set out to combine the French Intensive and biodynamic methods and add to them various ideas of his own, such as planting by the phases of the moon. In the 1960s he brought his meld of techniques to America, to the 4-acre Garden Project at the University of California at Santa Cruz. The acreage that he was given had an impossible soil, in which even weeds failed to grow. In one season, using simple hand tilling and organic materials, Chadwick and his students brought the acreage to fertility. In a few seasons they had the richest, most beautiful gardens around. The intensive method that Chadwick and his students used produced four times as many vegetables as a conventional garden using standard

rows. It also used half the water and took less time to maintain. And the vegetables were wonderfully plump, tasty, and nutritious. Chadwick's method, which came to be known as French Intensive Biodynamic Gardening, has proved to be perfectly adapted to small-space gardening. Using intensive methods, you can, for instance, grow as many carrots in 1 square foot as you can in a 12-foot row in a conventional garden. Properly handled, a 25-square-foot bed (5 by 5 feet) will produce a minimum of 200 pounds of vegetables. To accommodate today's lifestyles, a garden needs to fit easily into a very small plot, take as little time as possible to work, require a minimum amount of water, and still produce prolifically. By combining the intensive methods with small-space innovations like vertical gardening and other crop-stretching techniques, that's exactly what a postage stamp garden does. Postage stamp gardens are small. The smallest beds I recommend are 4 by 4 feet, the largest, 10 by 10 feet. Regardless of which size you choose, your garden will produce a tremendous amount of vegetables and, after the initial preparation, require little extra work, even less if you let an automatic drip system do the watering. The principles of postage stamp gardening are: Start with an initial super-boosting postage stamp soil mix. This allows you to produce a greater quantity of vegetables in a much smaller space. Plant the vegetables very closely together to save space, reduce watering, eliminate weeds, and create a healthier microclimate for your plants. Utilize crop-stretching techniques such as intercropping, succession planting, catch crops, and vertical gardening to pack in as many vegetables as possible in a limited space. Water deeply and regularly, but infrequently. Use organic methods, including companion planting, to keep your garden and the food you eat healthy and safe. When this book was first published in 1975, these concepts were unusual and revolutionary in the home garden. Since that time, there have been many imitators and variations, but the postage stamp method has stood the test of time. With more than half a million copies sold, this book has helped people of all gardening levels successfully grow many more vegetables in very tiny spaces. This new edition is fully revised and now contains information on heirloom seed varieties. Heirloom varieties not only produce excellent results, but you can also save the seeds for the next season to guarantee the same vegetable as the parent plant. Because heirloom vegetables are living artifacts of history, these old-time varieties offer a glimpse of earlier times when vegetables were known and grown for their flavor. The Postage Stamp Vegetable Garden offers simple, easy techniques that work. I hope you will try the postage stamp methods in your garden, and then experiment on your own. Get ready to plant. Whether you plant hybrid varieties or grow heirlooms, you will soon be able to enjoy the fruits of your labor.

As someone who has read Mel Bartholomew and been doing square foot gardening for several years, I found this book to be a bit of a disappointment. The author is a bit quirky and does a good job with basic concepts of gardening such as selecting varieties, composting, fortifying the ground, prepping the planting space, etc. Where the author falls down, IMHO, is approaching planting with a somewhat helter skelter attitude. I am not one to just broadcast seeds and come back later to thin them out. Tell me how many seeds I can put in an area so I save seed and don't have to worry about proper spacing! Also, putting asparagus in a sfg? Whaaaaaa???? Makes absolutely zero sense in my mind to plant perennial crops in anything but their own (Large, permanent) block. Still looking for a good guide (preferably portable) of plant spacing/seed density per sq ft, days to maturation, companion planting, etc. My current square foot garden book gets dragged out to the garden with me every time I am planting, there has got to be an easier way! At any rate, good intro book, but definitely not the I-ching.

I don't usually buy gardening books because they overwhelm me with requirements and rules right off the bat. Plus, I have a very small patch of full-sun ground and a bigger patch of most-sun and no book seems willing to help me deal with the differences. On a whim, I bought this book and it has become my absolute favorite. Its friendly tone taught me how to use all my space and what to plant, where, and when. Before I knew it, I was laying mulch and buying fish meal fertilizer and off we go! I just cut my season's first leaves of lettuce and am excited for more harvests. The book has excellent quick information: are cucumbers 'hot' or 'cold' plants? How to do I trim my tomato plants? It's all in there and easy to find. How to build a support structure given my materials and abilities? You got it - several different suggestions. I think this book is great for someone getting started. Give it a try - the results will taste like victory.

This is a great resource. I actually flipped through the whole thing, reading snippets from all different parts, the day I got it. You have to love a gardening book that helps you realize you can stash a garden bed (or two) wherever you might have a bit of space AND that is interesting enough you stay up late to finish looking through the whole thing! Go...garden...even a little!

I like the background material, the concept development and the planting advice. All of this is really solid and gives a good background to intensive gardening. After buying and soaking up this book, I then found references elsewhere to a form of gardening that builds on this information by divided up areas into grids and proscribed what could be in each grid. That is perhaps the only downside to this

book is that it does not define easily replicated planting patterns.

I've always had a garden. I have numerous plants in a relatively small space. This book helped me plan my vegetable garden better and helped me to learn what vegetables can and should be planted in the same area. It's a very helpful book.

Great book; beautifully illustrated and full of many ideas. Glad to have it in my library.

nice read. very useful!

I have 't read in order just bits and pieces, can write more later. Great book.

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