

All New Square Foot Gardening

- No Weeding
 - No Digging
 - No Tilling
 - No Kidding!
-
- Getting Started



MEL BARTHOLOMEW

- **Inventor**

By focusing on planting, spacing, weed control and soil, Mel pioneered this new method of gardening

- **Best-Selling Gardening Book**

- **PBS & Discovery Series**

- **Non-Profit Foundation**

- Schools

- Humanitarian



WHAT IS SQUARE FOOT GARDENING?

Compared to a conventional single-row garden:

- Grow 100% of the harvest**
- 20% of the space**
- 10% of the water**
- 5% of the seeds**
- 2% of the work**
- 0% of the weeds**

For beginning gardeners, the SFG Method is a great place to start without becoming overwhelmed by the effort that can go into growing food.



For seasoned gardeners, a switch to the SFG Method means more flexibility in how and what you grow, giving you more food in less time and space.

And for anyone who wants a beautiful landscape, the SFG Method adds to a yard's aesthetic appeal with a lovely raised-bed box, trellises, and "top hat" stacked boxes that enhance visual interest. (It goes without saying that the range of colors, shapes and textures of leaves, flowers, and fruits contained in a garden box is a landscaping element unto itself.)



The Ten Basics of Square Foot Gardening

1. PLANT DENSELY
2. GROW UP
3. ML'S MIX
4. LOCATION CLOSE
5. GROW SHALLOW
6. NO FERTILIZER
7. NARROW AISLES
8. NO SEED WASTE
9. PLANT IN SQUARES
10. ROTATE CROPS

Plant Density

- You can grow a lot of produce in less space than you might think. The size of the plant at maturity guides how many plants you can fit into one square-foot space. You don't want empty space between plants. That space is wasted in a SFG bed.



Grow UP

- Vining plants take up too much space if left to sprawl across a SFG bed. Growing up a trellis or other supports, vining plants can grow and produce as they are meant to without requiring so much space. You have lots of options for building your own or purchasing a trellis to support your beans, tomatoes, melons, and more.





Use Mel's Mix NOT Existing Garden Soil

- The Mel's Mix growing medium recipe is a result of years of formulation to achieve optimum plant nutrition, soil friability, and water retention. As opposed to garden soil, which contains weed seeds, tends to be heavy, and may have only marginal nutritional value.

Mel's Mix offers plants the conditions they need to thrive—and you know exactly what your plants are growing in.



Grow Where Its Most Convenient

- A garden that you look at every day is one that you'll pay the most attention to. Putting a SFG bed outside your door is ideal but certainly not always possible. Look for the spot that's most convenient, receives adequate sun, and makes the most sense to you.



Stop Using Fertilizer

- The combination of composts in Mel's Mix provides all the nutrients your plants need. Each time you replant a grid square, you add a little compost to replenish those nutrients, and that's it.



Keep Shallow

- Raised beds that are more than about 6 to 8 inches deep are unnecessary for growing most garden crops. Growing in a shallower bed conserves the resources that go into Mel's Mix and the water needed to keep it moist.

6 Inches Deep – Really???



Maintain Narrow Aisles

- Between your SFG boxes, a 3-foot aisle gives you room to work and gives your plants room to grow over the sides. Anything wider than 3 feet is unnecessary empty space; anything narrower will be difficult to work in.



Be Sparing With Seeds

- The SFG Method uses simple plant-spacing guidelines and doesn't ask you to overseed your garden. Use the seeds you need, and thin out very few plants when multiple seeds germinate.



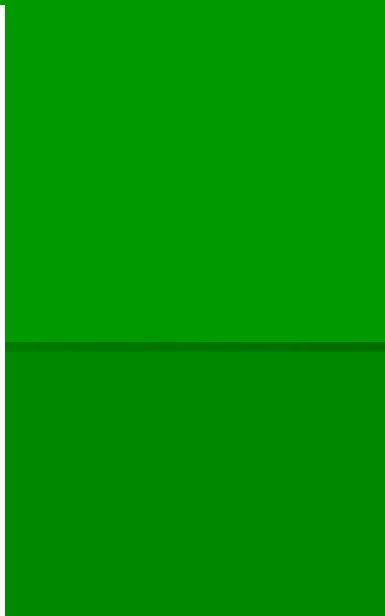
Plant in Squares

- Using 1-square-foot grid squares is the most efficient way to plant, and the grid is essential to the SFG Method. Plant for abundance with the basic and most used 1-, 4-, 9-, and 16-plant spacing strategy SFG is known for—and occasionally with one plant per two or more squares for very large vegetables



Rotate Crops

- Crop rotation happens almost without thought in a SFG bed. Thanks to your gardening plan, you'll know what plants were growing in each square each season, and you can change that up when it comes time to replant those squares.



8 STEPS

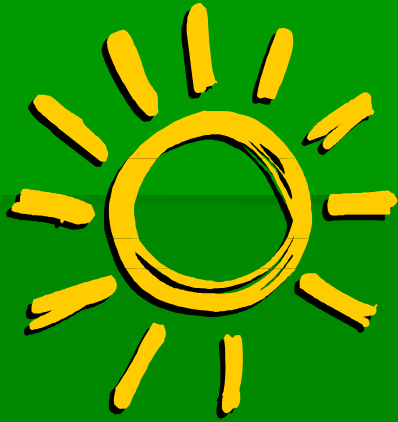
- 1. LAYOUT YOUR SFG
- 2. PLAN YOUR SFG
- 3. BUILD YOUR SFG BOX & GRID
- 4. BUILD YOUR SFG BOX & ACCESSORIES
- 5. FILL YOUR SFG BOX
- 6. PLANT ACCORDING TO YOUR SFG PLAN

STEP 1: LAYOUT

- Getting started is often the hardest part of gardening. The first step in the SFG Method asks you to envision what your garden will look like. Here, you're creating not just a place to grow food but also something beautiful for your yard, patio, balcony, or even a rooftop.



GARDEN LOCATION



Lots of Sun—6 to 8 Hours



Away from Trees



Close to House



No Puddles

Yak or Buffalo anyone?















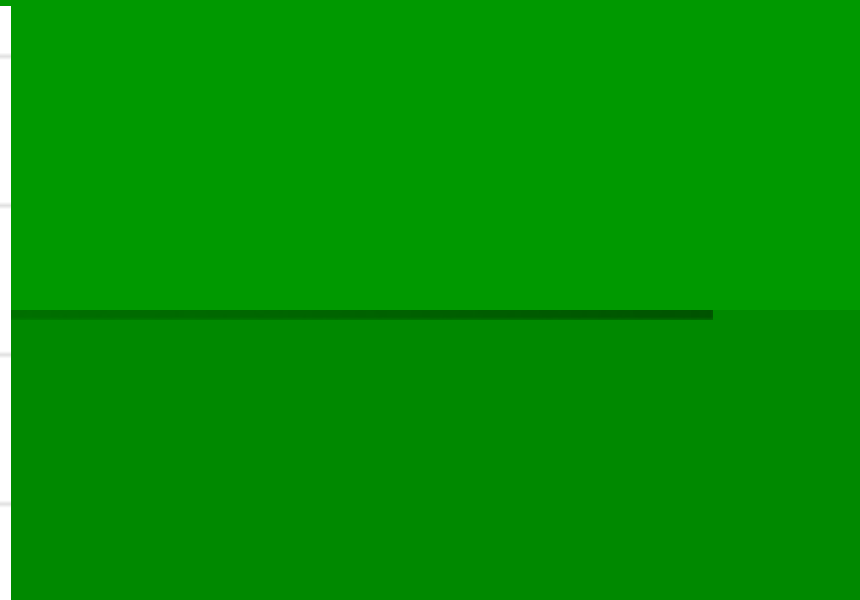
STEP 2: PLANNING YOUR GARDEN

- A companion step to laying out your garden is planning what to put in it. Planning is a great activity for the off season, while you're in garden-dreaming mode.



- **Grow what you like to eat**
- **Plant a different flower, vegetable or herb crop in each square foot**
- **Plant with the desired harvest in mind**
- **Stagger the harvest**
- **Prevents over-planting and waste**





Asa's Garden Plan 2014



STEP 3: BUILD YOUR BOX AND GRID

This is the first of two construction steps in the SFG Method. Before you can grow anything, you need to build your SFG box. This raised bed is integral to the SFG Method for a few reasons. Constructed in square-foot dimensions—4 feet by 4 feet is the traditional size you may want to start with—the SFG box supports the grid in which you'll grow your plants and contains the Mel's Mix growing medium.

Wood Box Construction



ADD WEED BARRIER



- Dig out sod/ weeds
- Add weed barrier or landscape cloth
- Cardboard
- Wet it down



WITHOUT A GRID IT ISN'T A SQUARE FOOT GARDEN!



















Costco boxes



STEP 4: BUILD YOUR BOX ACCESSORIES

While you can grow a nice garden in a SFG box on its own, smart and often-simple accessories can yield healthier plants with more productivity. Assembling these garden add-ons is the second of two construction steps in the SFG Method. There are several different types of accessories you can use to make growing easier in your SFG box.

Protective covers serve a range of purposes, from insect and animal exclusion to season extension. As birds, rodents, and insect pests discover the treasures growing in your SFG bed, add-on cages can keep your crops safe. These accessories can also help create a beneficial microclimate, get the spring growing season started a few weeks early, provide shade for cool-weather crops, and extend the harvest of fresh vegetables into the late fall.

Trellises and various other stakes and supports provide space and structure for vining crops to grow vertically.

Top hat boxes add depth to the Mel's Mix in individual squares to give root crops the ability to grow deeper. Both trellis and top hat accessories bring depth to your landscape, as well.









STEP 5: FILL YOUR SFG BOX

The growing medium you use in your SFG box makes all the difference. Mel's Mix is not just some bagged raised-bed potting mix. This growing medium is specially formulated to support plant health and productivity. It's a nice growing medium to work with as a gardener, too, because it doesn't require heavy digging, turning, or tilling. Plus, there are no synthetic additives or fertilizers in Mel's Mix.

MEL'S MIX:

1/3 peat moss

1/3 coarse
vermiculite

1/3 blended
compost



EXISTING SOIL – DOESN'T MATTER



- Mel's Mix – make one time only
- Boxes above ground
- Loose and friable
- All needed nutrients
- 6-inches deep enough

PEAT MOSS



- Natural Material From Peat Bogs – Decomposing Plant Material
- Improves Soil
- Water Retentive



COARSE VERMICULITE

- Mica rock – ground up and heated – pops up like popcorn
- Keeps soil loose
- Holds water – yet allows roots to breathe



Perlite?



COMPOST

- Use as 1/3 of soil mix
- Also use when replanting
- Contains nutrients
- No need for fertilizer
- Make your own, purchase bags, landfill



DON'T WANT TO MAKE COMPOST?

- Purchase bags of at least 4-5 different ingredients in compost and mix it together.
- Read the ingredients

Manure?



Glacier Gold?



MIXING MEL'S MIX



Anyone can make Mel's Mix!



STEP 6: PLANT ACCORDING TO PLAN

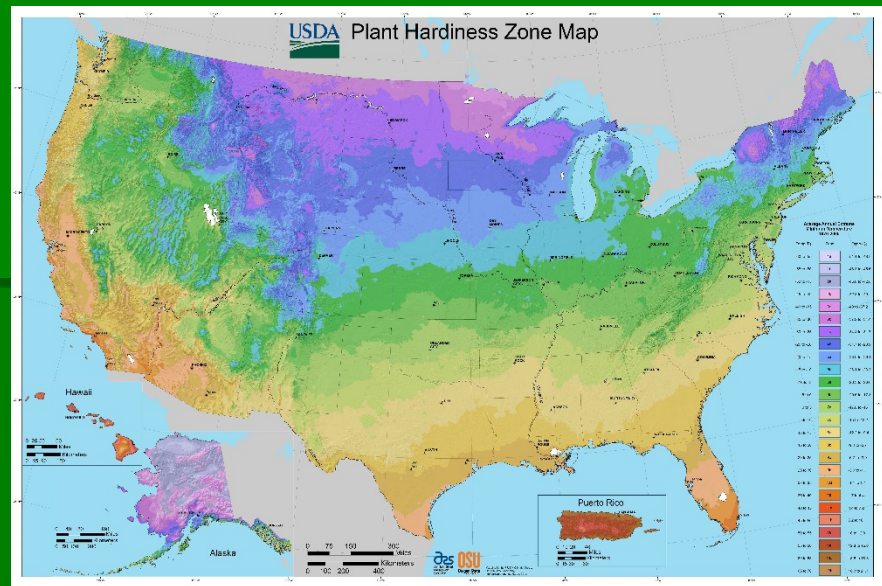
- With your SFG plan in one hand and a trowel in the other, your SFG bed is on the cusp of producing fresh food throughout the seasons, and you are mere weeks away from your first harvest.



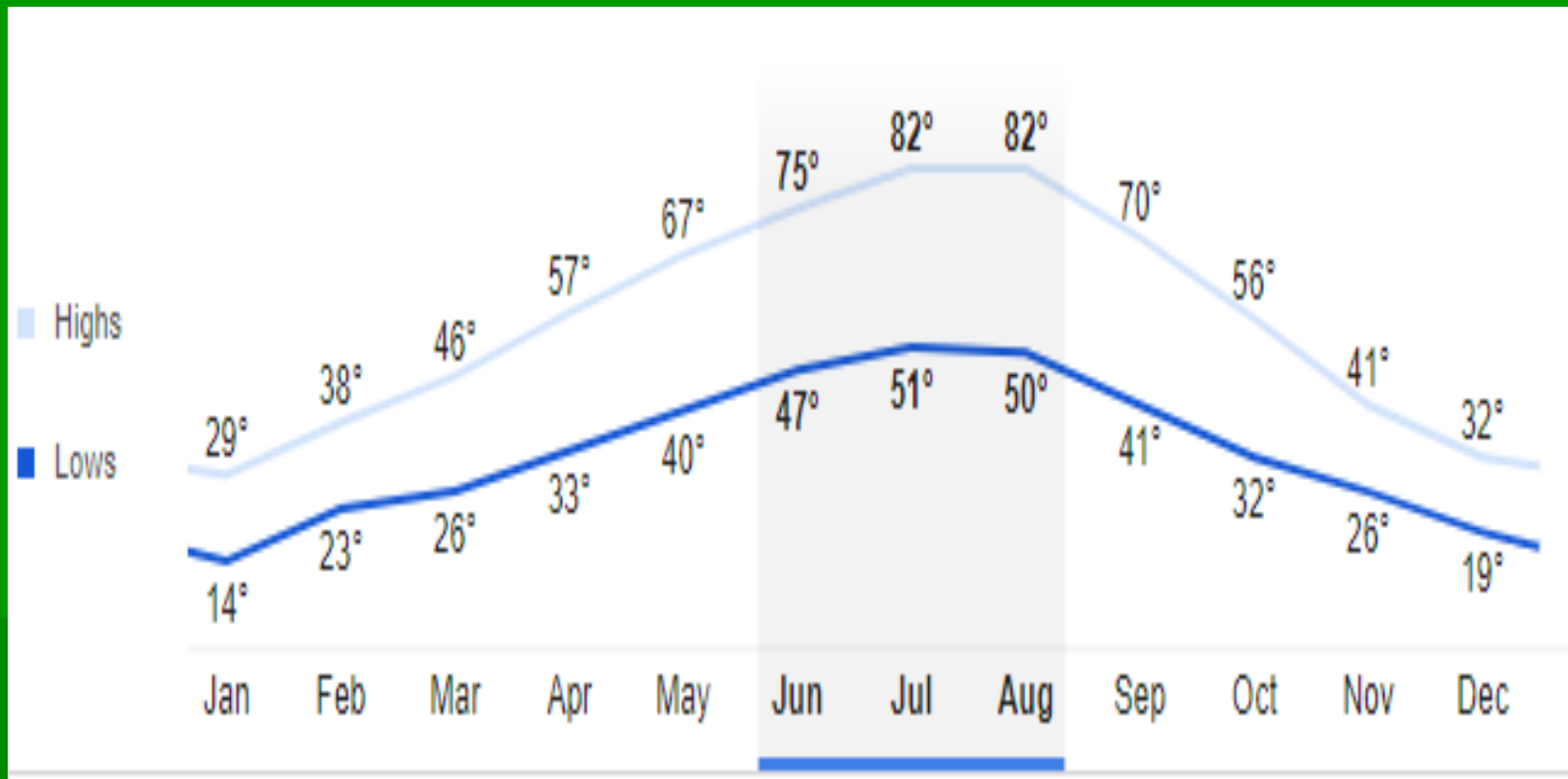
Seed Starting in Kalispell

- Limitations or Opportunities

Last spring frost! June 7th – Yes, that is right
Temperature at night – Cooling down – most plants need 50° or higher to grow 100-110 days of growing



Kalispell Temperatures



- In the planning step, you get to select the right varieties for your taste and climate. Start some of your own seeds indoors ahead of the garden season, source your transplants locally, and/or direct seed crops when appropriate.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)

SEEDS OR SEEDLINGS

- Most of the crops that you would grow that are 1 per square will have to be purchased or grown ahead before our frost date in Kalispell.
- Root crops are sown in the garden as seed.
- If your crop says that it needs more than 100 days, seed start it inside.

SEEDS TERMS

- Heirloom
- Open Pollinated
- Hybrid (May say F1 on packet)
- GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms)

SUSTAINABLE GARDENING

- Seed Starting
- Organic Growing
- Seed Saving

Amazing benefits come from continually growing your heirloom or open pollinated plants in a microclimate saving seed from year to year.



16 per Square (1-2" on seed packet)

Arugula (baby)

Carrots

Radish

Turnips

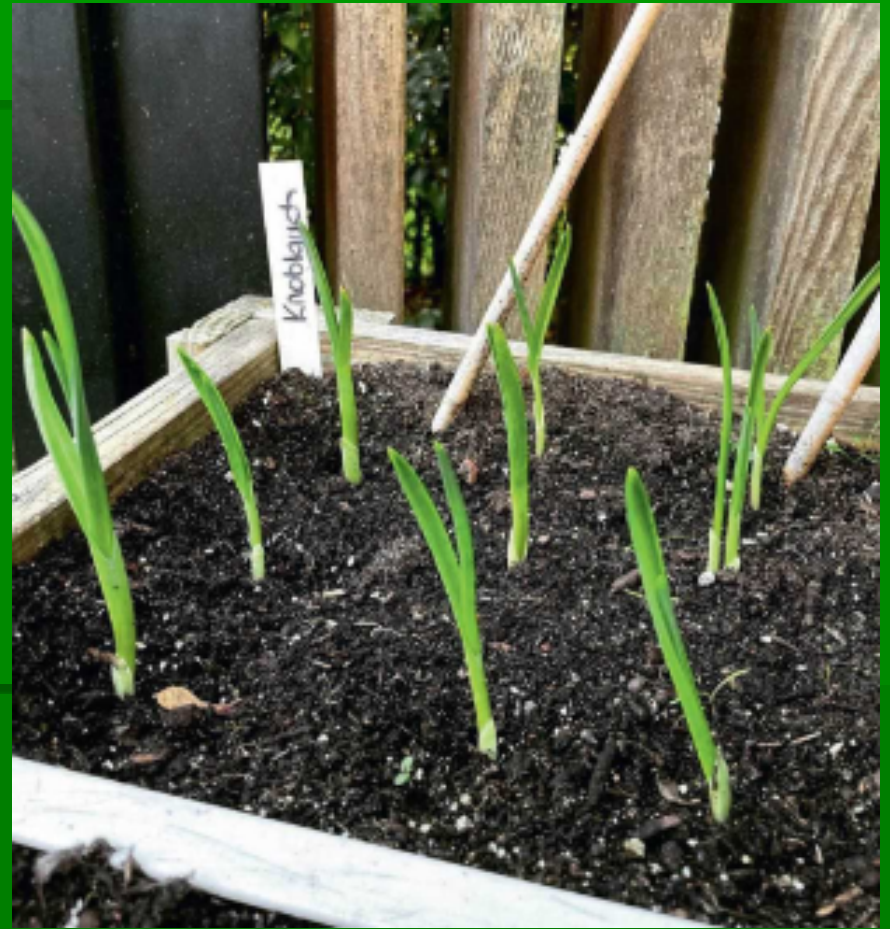
Green Onions





9 per Square (3-4" on seed packet)

Beans (bush)
Beets
Lettuce (baby)
Onions (sets)
Parsnips
Peas (bush)
Spinach
Turnips





4 per Square (5-6" on seed packet)

Basil

Bok Choy

Celery

Chives

Cilantro

Corn (more than 2 squares needed for pollination.)

Lettuce (head)

Parsley





1 per square (10-12" on seed packets)

Asparagus

Basil (large)

Broccoli

Brussel Sprouts

Cabbage

Cantalope

Cauliflower

Cucumber (3
per hill)

Dill

Eggplant

Kale

Fennel

Lavender

Pepper

Rosemary

Squash

Thyme

Tomatillo

Tomato

Watermelon



SPECIAL CROPS

- Potatoes
- Garlic
- Mint
- Asparagus
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Rhubarb



SPECIAL CROPS

■ Potatoes



■ Strawberries



<https://www.ana-white.com/woodworking-projects/cedar-vertical-tiered-ladder-garden-planter>

STEP 7: MAINTAIN YOUR SFG BEDS

- The **SFG Method** is a less labor-intensive means of growing food and flowers than traditional row gardening. Some maintenance tasks that you won't ever have to deal with are tilling and weeding. The occasional weed can be easily plucked out.



Watering a garden the size of a SFG box doesn't take much time or water. Mel's Mix is formulated to retain moisture, and when you deliver water directly to the plants' root zones—by hose, watering can, or drip irrigation—you're making the most efficient use of water resources.



HAND WATERING





WATERING WITH A HOSE

Thanks to the **nutrition and root support** provided by Mel's Mix, your plants are set up for strong, healthy growth. When insect pests and signs of plant disease show up, your SFG bed is small enough that you can deal with them quickly and with little effort. Rely on optimum plant health, pruning out disease issues before they get out of hand, and removing pest insects as soon as you notice them.



- Another maintenance task comes with the change of seasons in setting up and managing season-extension accessories. **Mulch, shade cloth, cold frames, row cover, and greenhouse plastic** are tools that can allow you to enjoy a harvest from your SFG bed throughout the year.



STEP 8: HARVEST FROM YOUR SFG BEDS

- Each step in the SFG Method leads you on a journey toward your harvest. Because you planned for maximum crop production with your garden planning in Step 2, you'll have crops to harvest throughout most of the year. The design of the SFG box—no more than 4 feet across—allows you to easily reach your crops for harvest.



Harvesting early in the day, before the heat or sun can cause wilting, and immediate cooling leads to the longest storage life.










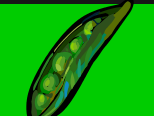
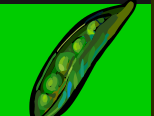




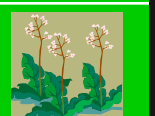
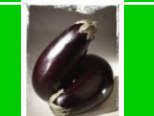

























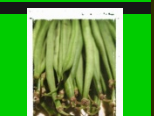








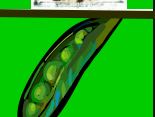
ALL THAT IN ONE 4X4 BOX?

- 1 head of cabbage
- 1 head of broccoli
- 1 head of cauliflower
- 4 heads of romaine
- 4 heads of red lettuce
- 4 heads of salad lettuce
- 5 pounds sugar snap peas
- 8 bunches of Swiss chard
- 9 bunches of spinach
- 16 small ball carrots
- 16 beets
- 4 bunches beet greens
- 16 long carrots
- 32 radishes

**But wait, there's
more**

Try This!!







A GARDEN FOR ALL AGES



Ages 4 to 94

ALL PHYSICAL ABILITIES



SCHOOL GARDENS



Teach Every Subject

INDIA



ALL AROUND THE WORLD

GUATEMALA



IRAQ



KENYA





**UNIQUELY
INDIVIDUAL**



BEAUTIFUL SETTING





**NEAT AND
ORGANIZED**

FITS ANYWHERE



SURROUNDED BY BEAUTY











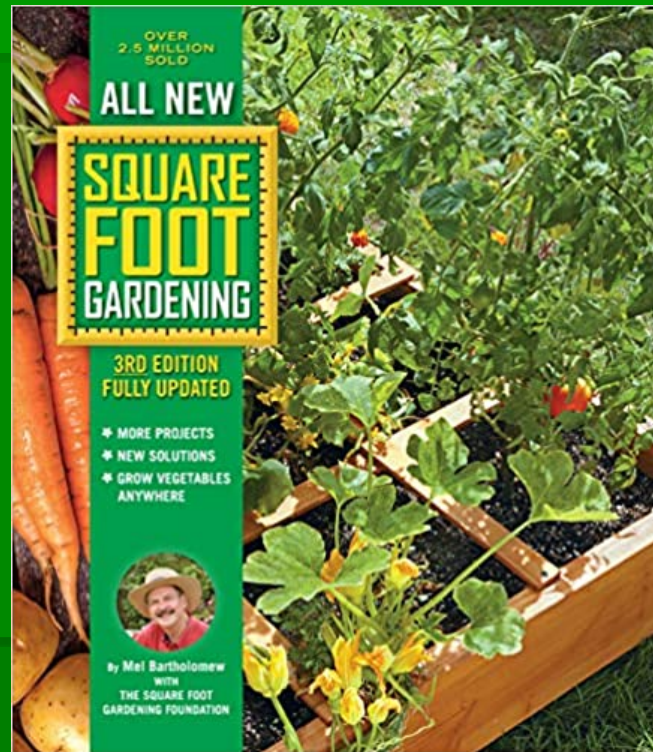




CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER!



SQUARE FOOT GARDENING FOUNDATION



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.squarefootgardening.com

Square Foot Gardening

Thank you for joining me today and giving up a portion of your Saturday to learn about Square Foot Gardening.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions,

Kathy Prim

- kprim@fvcc.edu
- kprim406@gmail.com

