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A POTAGER GARDEN — A WHAT?

I first heard of the term 'potager' in relation to gardening a few months ago. I immediately thought, 'A what?' So, I investigated. . .



Potager (pronounced po-tuh-gee) is a French word for 'kitchen garden' with intermingled vegetables, herbs, flowers and fruits. In France they are generally an informal garden similar to the English cottage garden with the focus on 'edibles' instead of flowers. They are always planted near the maison (house). Though a potager can also have a formal look.

One source I read described a potager as a 'tapestry of myriad colors and shapes' where plants, including perennials, are carefully placed so not to interfere with each other's seasonal growing. No chemicals are used, crops are rotated and companion planting is done. Herbs or flowers

that are a bit aggressive are planted in containers and set into the ground to limit their spread. The designs and layout are only limited by the designated space and creativity of the gardener. They may be raised beds with paths, square-foot garden areas, in-ground spiral, circular or multi-sided designs, etc. Plant choice and lay-out are also as creative as the gardener's wants, but thoughtful, commonsense planting is needed with some knowledge of each plant's requirements of light, space, water and compatibility.



Another source suggested two techniques to use when planning a potager: edge with contrasting flower and herb plants that will mask bare spots and choose plantings in



keeping with the scale of the garden. Online there are lots of lists of recommended potager 'fast filler' plants for replanting harvested spots and for edging beds and paths. Also, lots of photos, like the ones shown.

I am presently replanning my vegetable garden area to be more representative of a potager – moving herbs and including more

annuals that will mix well with herbs and vegetables as companion plants. My main problem is that I already know I don't have enough space for all I ideally wish to include, but I have a couple weeks to design, redesign, plant and move things. This year will be a trial run! Hopefully, the weather will cooperate so it will be a 'Bon Appetit' garden.

