

No Water Vegetable Garden

State Well Regulations for Household-Use-Only Wells:

Most private wells drilled on or after May 8, 1972, on properties less than 35 acres, are permitted for inside the home use only. Water cannot be used to irrigate gardens, windbreaks, livestock, or any other outside use. The theory behind this is that households actually use only 10% of the water and the rest returns to recharge the water cycle. Even though vegetables require more water than any other use, we installed this garden to show that even people without water rights can enjoy fresh, organic produce.

Gardening with no water:

- Locate garden under dripline, or near downspout in a sunny spot.
- Dig garden space 20- 24" deep.
- Line with ¼' wire mesh (to keep critters out), then with plastic (poke numerous holes for drainage).
- Amend soil with compost, alfalfa pellets, rotted manure or other organic matter to help the soil to hold water.

What to grow?

- Cool season vegetables are most reliable. Leafy greens are the easiest with this technique. Germinate seeds indoors and transplant -- seed germination needs even water, so it may be spotty when relying on rainfall.

Leafy Vegetables:

Lettuces

Chard

Endive

Escarole

Spinach

Radicchio

Kale

Arugula

Mustard greens

In 2013, we started the plants indoors and planted them outside on June 5. This June turned out to be extraordinarily dry, hot and windy. The first layer of soil dried out and killed many of the tender seedlings. This was the first year this happened to us. We are beginning to think that it may be safest to wait to plant when our rainy season starts, usually in July.