



Ultimate Edible Backyard Garden Design Checklist

Phase 1: Map Out Your Hard Infrastructure First

There are a few ways to go about this. We recommend creating a full property design including contours and the footprint of your home and any other existing structure.

From there you could add in any other structures you wish to include based on both convenience and where it would be difficult to plant anyway.

Bear in mind details such accessibility to different people, including those with walkers or any other assistance. If you are using raised beds consider age along with bending or crouching abilities, i.e. short beds for young folks and taller beds for the elders.

Also consider such fun variations for experimenting or 'just for the kids'.

Essential Structures (Choose & Position)

- 6x6 Dining Table - Where will you eat and entertain?
- Tool Shed (8x10 or 6x8) - Storage for equipment and supplies
- Work Bench (4x8 potting station) - For planting, repotting, harvest prep
- Compost Bin System (3-bin or large tumbler) - Waste to garden gold
- Water Collection (rain barrels, cisterns) - Position near downspouts

Pathways & Access

- Main Walkway (3-4 feet wide) - Primary garden access route
- Secondary Paths (2 feet wide) - Between growing areas
- Materials: Gravel, stepping stones, mulch, or pavers

Water Infrastructure

- Irrigation Lines - Plan main water routes before planting
- Hose Connections - Multiple spigots throughout space
- Electrical Access - For pumps, lights, or tools
- Water pumping and/or filtering system for ponds etc.



Phase 2: Design Your Growing Zones

Major Features (Choose & Size)

- In-Ground – You can mix with raised beds or containers
- Circular Herb Garden - Center focal point (8-12 feet diameter)
- Raised Bed Area - How many beds? What sizes? (4x8, 4x4, 2x8)
- Patio Containers or Vertical Gardens
- Pond/Water Feature - Size and location for ecosystem balance
- Lawn/Grass Areas - Open spaces for activities or pathways

Vertical Elements

- Fruit Trees - Mark spots for full-size or dwarf varieties
- Trellis Systems - For climbing plants (beans, grapes, berries)
- Pergola/Arbor - Over dining area or as garden feature
- Greenhouse/Hoop House - Season extension structure

Specialty Zones

- Berry Patch - Dedicated area for bushes and canes
- Cutting Garden - Flowers for bouquets and pollinators
- Tree areas – Fruiting or flowering
- Fragrance experiences – Jasmin or Roses

Phase 3: Support & Utility Areas

Storage & Organization

- Mulch Storage Bay - Contained area for bulk materials
- Harvest Processing Station - Outdoor sink and prep area
- Tool Organization - Hooks, racks, and easy access storage



Comfort Features

- Seating Areas - Benches, chairs for garden enjoyment
- Shade Structure - Umbrellas, gazebo, or planted shade
- Lighting - Solar or electric for evening use
- Fire Feature - Fire pit or outdoor fireplace

Phase 4: What Do You Want to Grow?

Now that you have your infrastructure mapped out, consider what you want to plant in each zone:

In The Ground:

Consider climbers that are going to be difficult to harvest if they are planted in a raised bed. Corn, pole beans, and sunflowers come to mind just to name a few.

In Your Circular Herb Garden:

What herbs do you cook with? List your favorites. Which would do well in your herb garden or which may be best planted alongside your veggies?

In Your Raised Beds:

What would not be as easy to maintain and harvest in the ground?

For Your Fruit Trees:

What fruits do you buy most often? Consider these first. Also, check out which other plants enjoy the company of fruit trees. You may be surprised!

Around Your Pond:

Do you want edible water plants? Options include watercress, water chestnuts, lotus, cattails. Which ones support beneficial critters? Hummingbirds just love Blue Bells

In Your Berry Patch(es):

Which berries do you enjoy? Choose 2-3 to start: Blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, elderberries. Remember to check companion plants! And Blueberries LOVE acidic soil so they must be planted separate.



Climbing Your Trellises:

What vertical crops appeal to you? Grapes, pole beans, peas, cucumbers, melons? Again, these may be best planted in the ground but not always!

Fill-in Plants:

What would you like scattered throughout? Edible flowers, ground covers, companion plants?

Phase 5: Implementation Priority

We recognize that this can look MUCH different for everyone due all kinds of factors but we just want you to consider how to make it manageable especially if you are starting from scratch! Foundational to this is knowing where you will plant so you can start with soil amendment, seed buying, and irrigation installment (if you want to use this).

Quick Planning Questions (some key ones to consider):

- How much time do you have to set this up based on your current space?
- How much time do you want to spend maintaining this?
- What's your total budget?
- Do you want to preserve/can produce?
- How many people will this garden feed?

#1 Task: Foundation

- Choose gardening areas
- Set up water and electrical systems
- Build/install raised beds and preferred features (maybe you want that pond right away!)
- Install hardscape (shed, dining area, major paths)
- Amend soil
- Plant your spring crop and plan yearly crop rotation

#2 Task: Maintenance and Expansion

- Add remaining structures (greenhouse, pond, additional beds)
- Establish annual vegetable growing routine
- Fine-tune irrigation and support systems
- Keep that compost churning!

