

Benefits of Milpa Gardening

- Increases soil microbial diversity and activity
- Attracts pollinators and other beneficial insects
- Improves soil health
- Creates diversity with a single planting
- Cycles and sequesters nutrients among plants
- Generates a variety of produce with reduced labor

What is Milpa Gardening?

The Milpa gardening techniques is rooted in the indigenous “three sisters” method which combines corn, squash, and beans to improve the soil and grow food.

Milpa gardening takes the idea of companion planting a step further and we have compiled a mix of 37 species aimed at the Northern gardener (matures in less than 90 days).

Milpa gardens are an excellent way to utilize a small portion of land to grow food without the hassle of tillage, weeding, and hours of planting.

Milpa Gardening for Northern Gardeners

Planting instructions:

Ideally, the seeds would be buried ½" - ¾" deep. However, if using a broadcasting method, it is recommended that you till or scratch the soil surface before broadcasting your seed. Mulching the area with straw or grass clippings will keep the ground moist long enough for germination while preventing birds from eating your seed. You will need to keep the ground wet for 10-15 days to allow seeds to germinate. Plant after the danger of frost has passed.

Weeding:

Hand weeding is recommended.

Harvesting:

Harvest windows differ among the species included in this mix. All have dates to maturity under 90 days.

Contact us

Butte Soil and Water Conservation District
208-423-8911
butteswcd@outlook.com

Visit us on the Web:

www.butteswcd.org

Where to Donate Produce:

You can donate produce to the Lost River Senior Center, the Mackay Food Pantry, & the Arco Food Bank, or other charity organization in our District

Mackay Food Pantry: Wednesdays, 208-588-3331

Lost River Senior Center: M-F, 208-527-8296

Arco Community Food Bank: Tues. & Sat., Epiphany Episcopal Church, 208-220-9785

Seed Mix Includes:

Contender bush beans, Kentucky wonder 125 pole beans, sugar snap peas, green arrow garden peas, French horticulture green bush beans, crimson clover, crackerjack African marigold, autumn beauty sunflower, lemon queen sunflower, blanket flower, blue flax, purple coneflower, pink celebration radish, purple plum radish, white icicle radish, dwarf blue curled scotch kale, tendergreen mustard, perpetual spinach swiss chard, arugula, barese swiss chard, bloomsdale spinach, wee be little pumpkin, tatume summer squash, table king acorn squash, black diamond watermelon, yellow crimson watermelon, homemade pickles cucumbers, lemon cucumber, tuxana sweet corn, starburst manna parching corn, Minnesota midget melon, Iroquois melon, cocozelle summer squash, prolific straightneck summer squash, yellow bush scallop summer squash

Project Overview:

The Butte SWCD received grant funding to provide milpa garden seed mixes to residents of the Butte SWCD at no charge.

Requirements for participation are:

- 1) Plant and maintain your milpa garden
- 2) Donate 10% of your harvest to the local food bank, senior center, or other local charity
- 3) Submit photos to the Butte SWCD for outreach purposes
- 4) Consider seed saving to create a sustainable food source for our residents

About the Seed Mix:

All seeds are an heirloom variety, meaning seeds can be collected for planting the next year. Our variety includes 37 species under 90 days to maturity. The seed mix comes in two sizes and is designed to cover 100 or 1,000 square feet. Water and fertilize as needed.

