

# 2023 Echo Valley Community Garden Proposed Farm Plan

The following plan is for our discussion on Sunday, December 18, 10-12 pm at Beaver Point Hall. If we say 'yes' to this plan it will set us on our way to a 4<sup>th</sup> great season together! The plan was developed by Kristin, Mark, Dave, and Bryan and is based on our discussions between us and as a whole group, our group preferences over time, and, of course, the survey -- the results for which were sent out in November.

Looking forward to talking about it together. In the meantime, take a look at this proposed plan and come with your questions & comments.

## 1. Crops (10 shares):

Seed purchasing starts in January through Veseys, West Coast, Baker Creek Seeds, and other suppliers. We are going to expand seed saving opportunities and that is a key criterion for choosing seeds going forward with some exceptions. Here are proposed varieties for 2023:

- ⊗ Squash\*: Bush Delicata, Waltham Butternut, Uchiki Kuri - (Goal: 10-15 each) (30 plants/bed = 60 total)
- ⊗ Pole Beans\*: Fortex (1 row, saved seed)
- ⊗ Onions\*: Kelsae (or pick a yellow) & Rosa di Milano (2 rows; 500 seeds/bed +30% extra = 1300 seeds, 2:1 ratio)
- ⊗ Carrots: Napoli (1.5 rows, 6000 seeds)
- ⊗ Beets: Two varieties (0.5 of a row, 1080 seeds)
- ⊗ Garlic\*: XXXXX (Total 110 bulbs each, 2 rows)
- ⊗ Sprouting Broccoli: Red Spear (courtesy Mark!) (1 row)
- ⊗ Cauliflower: Walcheron or Galleon (4-5 each, 1 row)
- ⊗ Brussel Sprouts: Nautic (1.5 rows)
- ⊗ Cabbages: Danish Ballhead, Jan. King, Fildenkraut (1.5 rows)
- ⊗ Potatoes: Red Pontiac & Sieglinde (5 lbs. ea., 60 seed)

\*These are varieties we will be saving seed for.

## 2. Farm Approaches

A key to success for our farm overall is communication with one another, and consensus wherever possible.

- ⦿ **Manageability:** A theme from the survey & from comments many have made is that we need to be careful about adding too much complexity to our little enterprise. This means choosing the number of crops & systems we use for lack of complexity & ease of management.
- ⦿ **Seed saving:** Many varieties will be selected for their ability to be saved. Carrots are harder to isolate, and consistency is harder to achieve with open pollinated, so Napoli, an excellent hybrid, is usually selected.
- ⦿ **Seed & seedling counts:** The leads recommend a 30% overage in seed quantities and starts to ensure best results.
- ⦿ **Starts:** The leads will ask for some help to raise seedlings but learning from previous seasons this stage of the process is a team effort requiring close attention as the group is depending on the results.
- ⦿ **Rotations:** A rotation system is now in place and will govern placement of crops for 2023 and subsequent years. See the rotation plan explanation and diagram on the following pages.

### 3. Crop Rotation South Down Gardens

#### Year 1

- Ⓢ Present sample bed containing Squash/roots
- Ⓢ Harvest Squash and either harvest all roots (preferable for management purposes), or leave roots overwinter.
- Ⓢ Seed overwinter cover crop (crimson clover or grain/pea/vetch mix)

#### Year 2

- Ⓢ Cover crop from overwinter cut down early summer & left as mulch or tilled, followed by quick buckwheat cover crop depending on soil moisture & willingness of group.
- Ⓢ In October, garlic planted in 2 beds, and 2 beds left bare (mulched) over winter to be ready to receive onion seedlings the following spring.

#### Year 3

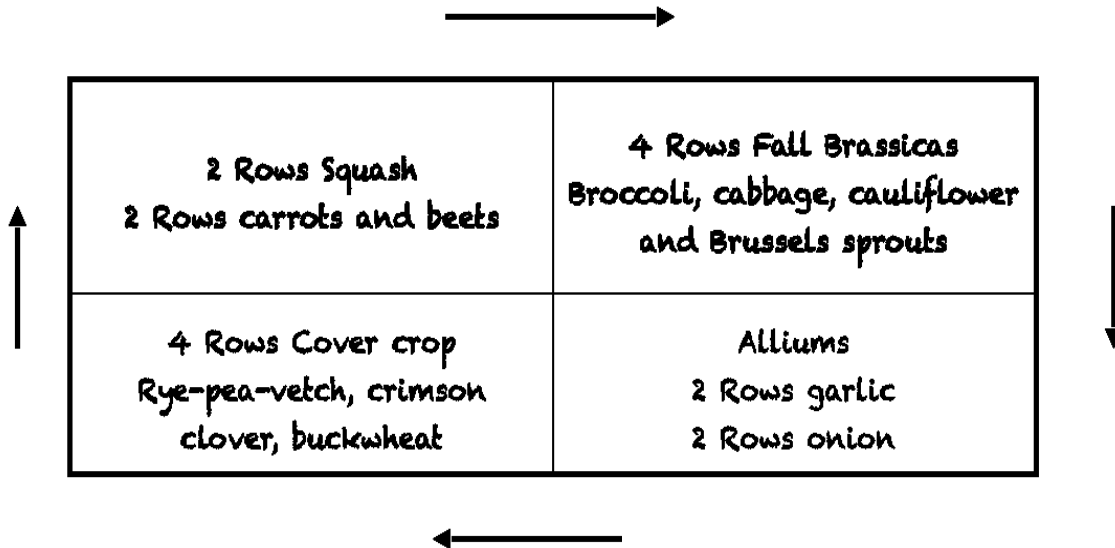
- Ⓢ Alliums harvested in summer then seeded to overwintering cover crop.

#### Year 4

- Ⓢ Overwintering cover crop cut down (same options as above), lime applied, brassicas planted.
- Ⓢ Rinse and repeat for subsequent years.

## Crop Rotation Diagram

This diagram show the four garden quadrants that are rotating annually and the crops in each. Not to scale.



### 4. Amendments:

Overall strategy is external input & cost reduction over time while building soil fertility. Amendments chosen according to crop needs.

- Ⓢ **Green manure:** An excellent way to decrease inputs. The leads recommend that treatments be discussed first to ensure they fit into the plan.
- Ⓢ **Cow & sheep manure:** Secured from Mark or Mike and Marjorie 6-8 months ahead of need, tarped.
- Ⓢ **Alfalfa:** Organic pellets.
- Ⓢ **Bloodmeal:** Organic.
- Ⓢ **Fish fertilizer:** As a band-aid only due to cost, environmental costs, and labour required.
- Ⓢ **Organic 4-4-4:** Expensive so we will aim to substitute it over time or use it if we are short on manure.
- Ⓢ **Composting:** Adding a composting program needs significant ongoing effort to be successful so the leads recommend against relying on composting for farm fertility for now.

## 5. Farm Calendar

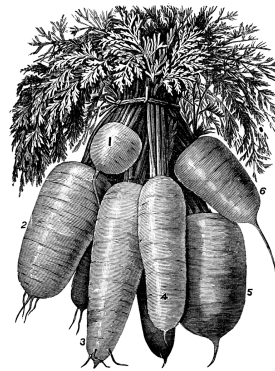
Here is a basic calendar of typical events through the annual cycle.

- Ⓢ Jan - Feb 15: Break
- Ⓢ Feb 15: Start onions
- Ⓢ March: Tilling, plant carrots, prep squash beds
- Ⓢ April 15: Start squash, plant beets, plant onions
- Ⓢ May: Start beans
- Ⓢ June: Start Brussels seeds
- Ⓢ July: Start other winter seeds
- Ⓢ August: Plant winter starts
- Ⓢ September: Harvest, clean up
- Ⓢ October: Plant garlic, turn off irrigation, store timers
- Ⓢ November: Mulch carrots, beets; new farm plan
- Ⓢ December: Seed buying, reflection meeting, farm plan decision

## 6. Budget

Karen will present a budget and share cost early next year, but one new item the leads will recommend to the group is lighting to set up another member to start onions. Aside from that it's seed, starter mix, some additional irrigation supplies & amendments as our main costs unless we decide to expand what we are doing.

Looking forward to 2023 as we  
Get down and dirty with our neighbours!Ⓢ



Ⓢ Mark and Robert ☺