



CROP PRODUCTION MANUAL

CREATED BY CULTIVATING COMMUNITY, PORTLAND ME

Summary

This is a resource designed to provide farmers with readily accessible, technical information and cultural practices for organic vegetable production without relying on advanced English literacy skills. This manual can be introduced in pre-season crop planning settings and subsequently used throughout the planting season. Though the practices and suggested planting dates presented are specific to our New England growing season, the icons can be easily modified to represent practices and timing suited to your farm and locale.

Who made this guide?

This teaching resource was developed by Cultivating Community and enhanced in collaboration with the Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED). From 2015-2017, ISED partnered with refugee farmer training programs throughout the country to support the design of new and shareable teaching resources for culturally and linguistically diverse farmers. To access the whole list of newly developed teaching resources for refugee farmer training program, follow this link to New Entry's ['New American Resource Library'](#). For more in-depth explanations of the teaching approaches and activities used in these materials, you can refer to this [Refugee Farmer Teaching Handbook](#).

Audience (TA Or Tot)	TA (Technical Assistance for farmers)
Language and Literacy Level	Initial training on the manual and its uses is more easily completed with interpretation or moderate literacy skills, but is not necessary. Subsequent follow-up does not require advanced English skills.
Farmer Experience	No experience necessary for majority of the content—some references to specific tools or techniques (e.g., black plastic, row cover) may be most suited to farmers with 1+ year of experience. Some of the more advanced/specialized content in the manual (e.g., market demand, days to maturity) will need more advice and/or more literacy.
Pre-Requisites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Numeracy • Calendar familiarity • Specific vocabulary is helpful (rows, spacing, plastic.)
Region or Climate	Any (materials will need to be adapted)
Program Structure	Any
Season	Any
Time	30 minutes for introductory workshop
Staff and Interpreters	Interpretation preferred for introductory workshop
Additional Supplies Needed	Computer and projector
Background Material	None

TEACHING MATERIALS INCLUDED

1. “Crop Manual” PowerPoint

The screenshot displays three slides from the 'NASAP Crop Manual' PowerPoint. The first slide is the title slide, which includes the title 'NASAP Crop Manual', a subtitle 'A guide for planning and planting vegetables at the New American Sustainable Agriculture Project in Southern and Central States', and contact information for Alex Redfield. The second slide is a detailed information card for 'AMARANTH/CALLALOO', listing its popularity (Low), price (\$5/bu), varieties (Astra, Arugula), days to maturity (30), first planting (April 15 - April 30), succession (Every 2 to 3 weeks), and last planting (August 1 - August 15). It also includes icons for planting methods: 'Seed or Transplant', '6-12" Apart', and '3 Rows - 12" apart', along with a note 'Likes heat, No Frost'. The third slide is a similar information card for 'ARUGULA', listing its popularity (Medium), price (\$9-12 / lb), varieties (Astra, Arugula), days to maturity (30), first planting (April 15 - April 30), succession (Every 2 weeks), and last planting (August 15 - August 30). It includes icons for 'Plant from Seed', 'Seeds 1 Inch Apart', '3 Rows - 6" apart', 'Row Cover', and 'Likes cold, not good in hot weather'.

2. “How to Use NASAP Crop Manual” PowerPoint

CORE SKILLS IN THIS LESSON

- Season identification and description
- Seed spacing
- How much to plant
- Months and days naming
- Rows and beds formation
- Succession planting
- Weed management (black plastic and row cover usage)
- Mulch
- Appropriate crops for tunnels

SUGGESTED TEACHING METHODS

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- Provide physical examples of the materials referenced in the activity. Having samples of black plastic and row cover makes it easy to communicate which crops benefit from their usage. Supplying actual seeds of the crops in question allows for practice in spacing out seeds and easier demonstrations of row/bed culture and in-row spacing.

Oral drills

- Quizzing participants in their ability to search out individual pieces of information in the manual was effective. Asking questions like “When is the first day Arugula can be planted?” or “How far apart do eggplants go?” allows individual farmers to experience digging through the material to find answers to common questions.

TEACHING TIPS AND VARIATIONS

- Involving farmers in the editing and generation of this manual can be an effective way to build trust and familiarity in the final document. Asking a group of more experienced farmers to identify which crops need black plastic, for example, and going through the pages of the manual to update it accordingly, could be a more collaborative way of adapting the document.
- This resource can be paired with other crop planning documents or activities to generate a robust crop plan or seed order. We use this as a reference in the spring to identify which crops are planted in frequent succession or high densities in forming our initial seed order, but it could be expanded upon to build out crop maps or (with more accurate pricing and demand information) revenue projections.