



*Photo by Bill Swantner*

## **This month in the Vegetable Garden: February**

*In February, the nurseries start selling tomatoes; the larger tomatoes earlier in the month, “cherry” tomatoes (Ruby Crush, BHN968) later in the month. The 4” tomatoes can be potted up into 1-gallon containers but it’s too early to plant tomatoes in the ground.*

*As we dream about spring vegetable gardens; consider David Rodriguez’s 90% guidelines. The idea is, following these guidelines, a vegetable gardener should be successful 90% of the time:*

- 1) Spring-Summer vegetables need 8-10 hours of full, direct sun;*
- 2) Remove any root competition: Weeds & grasses (Bermuda is especially bad at invading gardens), avoid planting vegetable gardens near bushes or trees.*
- 3) Efficient watering: With this having been a “dry” winter, drip irrigation is the most efficient form of watering. Hand watering can splash water on the leaves of vegetables, which can promote disease development.*
- 4) Soil amending: Incorporate a couple of inches of well-aged manure-based compost into the soil. Then in March, mix in a 19-5-9 slow release fertilizer at 3-5 lbs per 100 sq. ft. If using an organic fertilizer, like a 3-2-3, proper fertilization might require using more than a synthetic fertilizer. Also, if using an organic fertilizer, incorporate into the soil about 6 weeks before planting.*
- 5) Spacing: Vegetables that are planted too close to each other prevent adequate airflow and also can increase the possibility of spreading disease and insects.*
- 6) Buy plants recommended by TAMU. The plants recommended by TAMU are recommended because they have undergone years of growing & testing, many here in Bexar County. [Recommended varieties of Spring vegetables for Bexar County can be found here.](#)*

*Our Entomologist, Molly Keck, tells us to look early for insects. A warm winter can encourage insects to start their lifecycle early.*

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