

## PLANTING THE GARDEN

### Choosing the Plants

The garden team has been gathered, the garden has been laid out, the soil has been amended, and the beds are being prepared! At last it is time to choose the seeds and plants! This is a very exciting time! There are many seed and plant catalogs available which contain a wealth of information for plant and seed selection. Science, math, reading and other curricula can all be integrated into this activity. However, before seeds or plants are actually purchased, it is wise to determine the following:

- Will it be a specialty garden? [Click here to learn more about Specialty Gardens.](#) What types of plants are desired? For instance: vegetables or flowers. If flowers are to be included, will annuals or perennials be planted, or a mix of both? Will there be several beds each with different types of plants or will each bed have diverse plantings?
- What is your climate zone? Click this link [http://www.mastergardenerssandiego.org/Vegetable Planting Guide1.pdf](http://www.mastergardenerssandiego.org/Vegetable%20Planting%20Guide1.pdf) to go to the zone map in the Vegetable Planting Guide for San Diego County.
- Click this link [http://www.sunset.com/sunset/web/Sponsors/Garden/sunsetmonrovia\\_r1/htmlfiles/zone\\_map3.html](http://www.sunset.com/sunset/web/Sponsors/Garden/sunsetmonrovia_r1/htmlfiles/zone_map3.html) to go to the Sunset climate zone map for California for more detailed information.
- To assist in choosing suitable plants check a reference book that is specific to southern California, the *Sunset Western Garden Book*, to determine the plants that will grow well in your particular climate zone.
- Note the growing characteristics of the chosen plants: Does a plant need full sun, partial shade or full shade?
- How much water does a particular plant require? Does it have any other specific needs such as soil type? Does it need to be started in a particular season?
- Determine the compatibility of various plants to be grown. If planting beds will contain diverse plants, it is best to group the plants by their cultural characteristics: water needs, sun/shade requirements, size at maturity and whether it is an annual or a perennial. It is possible to have plants with various water needs in one bed; however, it is best to group them according to their water requirements.
- Determine the space requirements: height, width and shadow pattern. Remember to leave sufficient room for the plants to achieve their mature size without crowding or overwhelming other plants. Also consider the invasiveness of some plants (e.g., Jerusalem artichokes or mint).