

## **Growing Perennial Vegetables. Why Not?**

### Definition of Perennial Vegetables

A plant that lives for a few years, grown for eating (part or whole), may be eaten raw or cooked. You should be able to harvest the plants without killing them. Some perennials can be lifted, stored and replanted in spring for the next year.

Advantages of growing perennial vegetables:-

Don't have to cultivate the soil every year.

Perennials are planted only once or every few years.

Less weeding required. as time goes by when the soil has not been turned, the dormant seed remain inactive especially if you mulched around the plant.

Growing food creates carbon in the atmosphere. A lot of crops are short-lived, and cultivated intensively every year. By digging the soil, it exposes the soil matter to the air, leading to the release of carbon. So when there is no or less digging, carbon is stored in the soil. This is because of certain fungi (mycorrhizal fungi). The fungi take sugars from the plant while enabling the plant to absorb water and nutrients more efficiently, therefore facilitating growth. In simple terms the fungi is an extension to the root system. Soil cultivation kills the fungi.

Soil structure is improved and maintained when there is no digging, which in return, helps everything that grows in it. The level of soil humus will build up, nutrients won't be washed out. There will be water retention during drought, yet well drained in wet weather.

Food produced will be healthier - Perennials have larger and permanent root systems, able to use the space more efficiently and take up more nutrients. As perennial vegetable is allowed to flower, it will be valuable to bees and other pollinating insects.

There are different types of perennial vegetables.

For example, Asparagus, Good King Henry, Jerusalem Artichokes, Lovage, Rhubarb, French Sorrel, Goji Berry, other fruits etc.

A lot of tubers, bulbs and roots are perennial vegetables too.

For example: - Tubers: Chinese Artichoke, Groundnut, Mashua, Oca, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Yam and so on. Bulbs: Egyptian Onions, Elephant garlic, garlic and etc.

Roots: Scorzonera, Sea Kale, Sweet Cicely, Marsh Mallow etc.