

# GREEN GIANT

Kitchen garden expert Ellen Ecker Ogden's vegetable plots are renowned for their fresh flavors and even fresher designs. She tells us how her garden grows.







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It might seem an unlikely choice to train pole beans up an arbor, but I want my small backyard garden to have some visual rewards, too. Just because you eat it, doesn't mean it needs to look plain or practical.

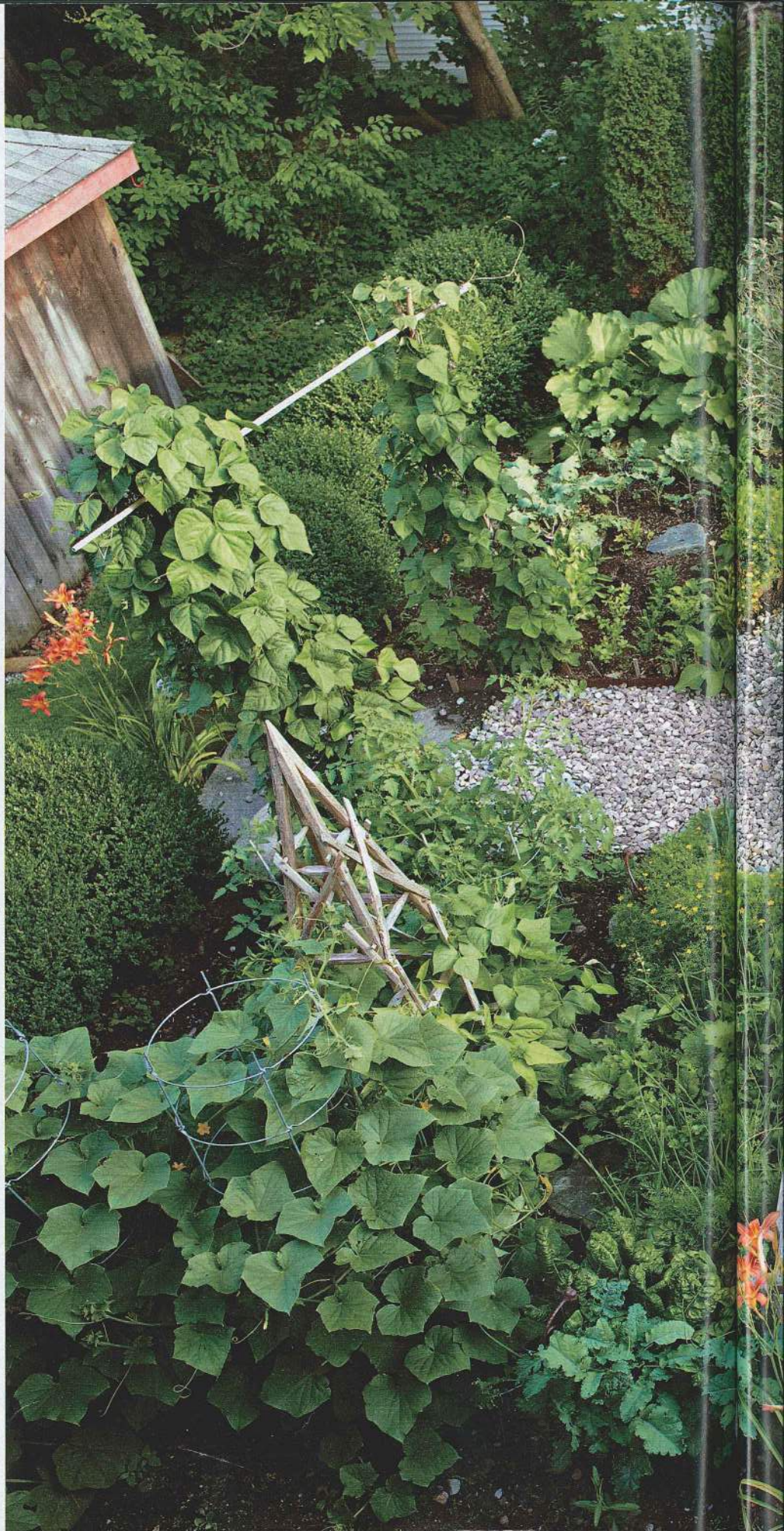




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When I planted my first vegetable garden, I was fresh out of art school and thought it would be a good way to feed myself. It was constant trial and error, but the thrill of dashing to the garden to clip a few leaves of frilly Lolla Rossa lettuce and crimson Bull's Blood beet greens kept me at it. My kitchen garden has evolved into more than a place to grow food, and my long, straight rows have given way to fancy arcs and geometric triangles. I found inspiration from European kitchen gardeners and formal design. Today, I grow a compact four-square potager design in my southern Vermont backyard. Every year I start with a plan on paper and the blank canvas of rich organic soil. Then I start to decorate with plants, adding bamboo structures that provide drama and height. My garden includes plenty of quick-growing lettuces and ornamental flowers, along with fruits, herbs, and other heirloom vegetables; I blend color and variety in every bed. Seeds and plants are my paintbrush.







Pea-gravel paths separate the four quadrants and keep things orderly. Stepping-stones within the beds make it easy to navigate. I include a bench in my gardens. It's great for a quick rest or to sit and watch the garden grow.





## IN ELLEN'S KITCHEN GARDEN

*My 25×25-foot garden yields produce for two with extra for sharing, pickling, and freezing. My favorites include:*

### FRUITS

- CUCUMBER**  
'Boston Pickling'
- EGGPLANT**  
'Rosa Bianca'
- SWEET PEPPER**  
'Corno di Toro'
- TOMATOES**  
'Brandywine',  
'Big Rainbow', and  
'Green Zebra'
- CAPE GOOSEBERRY**  
'Aunt Molly's  
Ground Cherry'

### ROOTS

- CARROTS**  
'Touchon' and  
'Chantenay'
- GARLIC**  
'German Red'
- ONIONS**  
'Red Torpedo', 'Walla  
Walla Sweet', and  
'Summer Bunching'
- POTATO**  
'French Fingerling'
- TURNIP**  
'Gilfeather'

### LEAFY GREENS

- KALE**  
'Lacinato'
- SWISS CHARD**  
'Five Color  
Silverbeet'
- COLLARD**  
'Champion'
- MESCLUN**  
Cutting lettuce,  
arugula, mustard,  
cress, and chervil
- ENDIVE**  
'Maraichere  
Tres Fine'

### VEGETABLES

- ARTICHOKE**  
'Imperial Star'
- BROCCOLIS**  
'Romanesco',  
'Rapini', and 'Early  
Purple Sprouting'
- PEAS**  
'Green Arrow'  
and sugar snap
- POLE BEAN**  
'Trionfo Violetto'



### MEET THE GARDENER

## ELLEN OGDEN

Author of *The Complete Kitchen Garden* (\$24.95; [ellenogden.com](http://ellenogden.com))

### I GET INSPIRED BY

Talking to other gardeners and seeing other gardens.

### MY 80:20 PLAN

Grow 80 percent tried and true plants and 20 percent new-to-me, heirloom vegetables.

### RULE WORTH BREAKING

Forget straight rows. Plant in color blocks or swirls, staggering heights for interest.

### FAVORITE TOOL

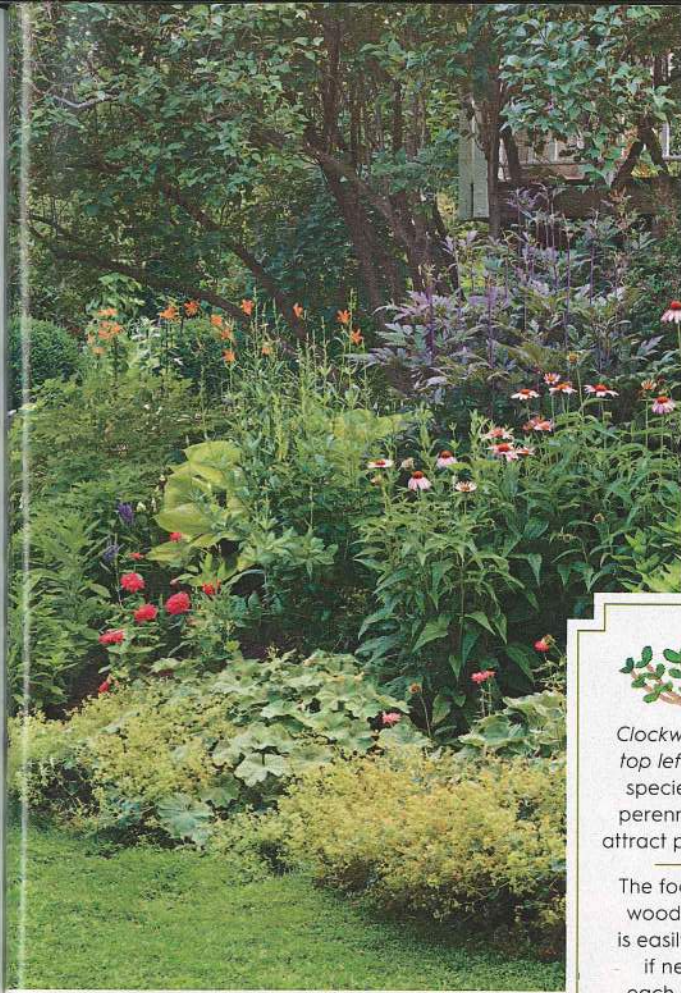
A garden dibber helps with spacing, marking rows, and making holes for planting.

### PLANNING AHEAD

Saving seeds for vegetables—peas, beans, salad greens—means you are always ready for spring.

“Edibles don't have to be planted in rows. Grow with whimsy, and work becomes play.” ELLEN ECKER OGDEN





*Clockwise, from top left:* Native species in the perennial beds attract pollinators.

The focal point wood obelisk is easily moved if needed each season.

A viburnum tree in the center of the garden becomes a natural trellis for morning glories or red runner beans.

'Lemon Gem' marigolds and artichokes lean out of their beds at the entrance. ■

