

Gardening for food: tips and tricks



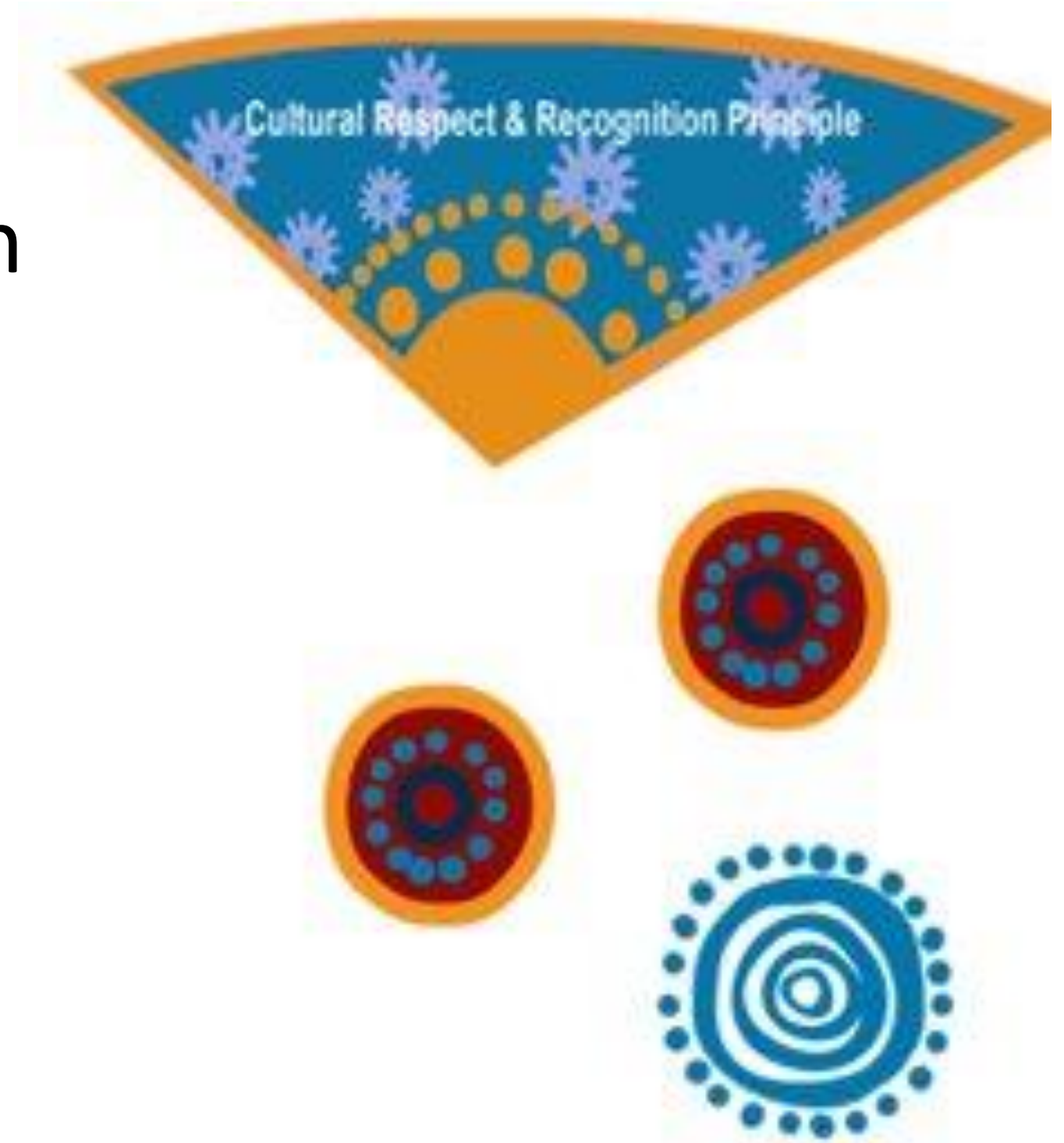
Presented by
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Acknowledgment of the Traditional Custodians

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which this session is taking place.

I pay my respects to Elders past and present and emerging.



Presentation outline

TOPICS FOR TODAY

Setting up your garden beds

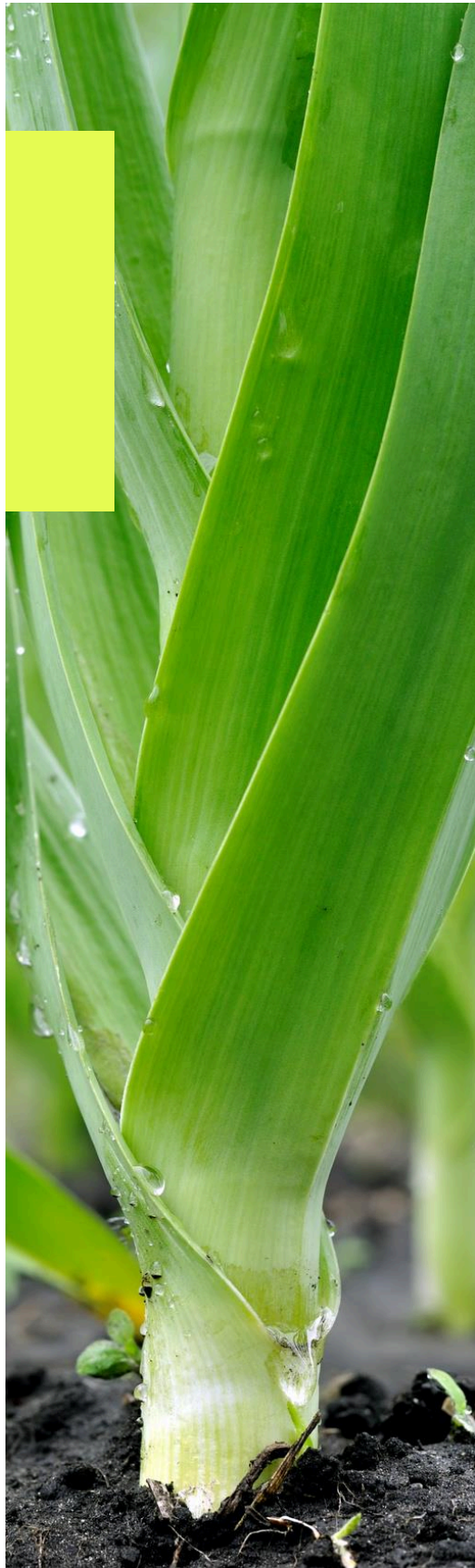
Soil health

Composting and worm farms







Seasonal planting for your area

Maintaining enthusiasm and support long term

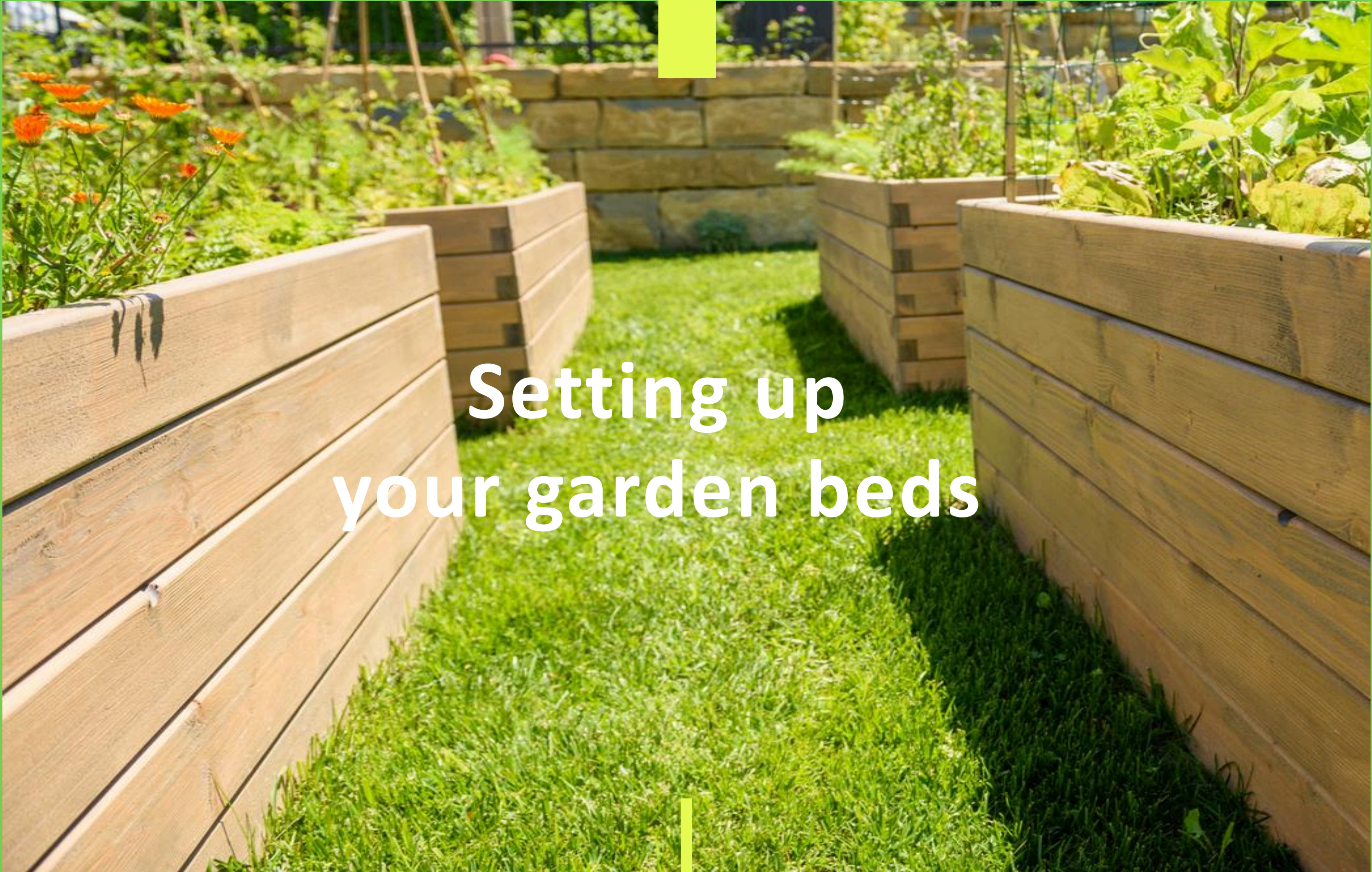




o The thing about gardening.....

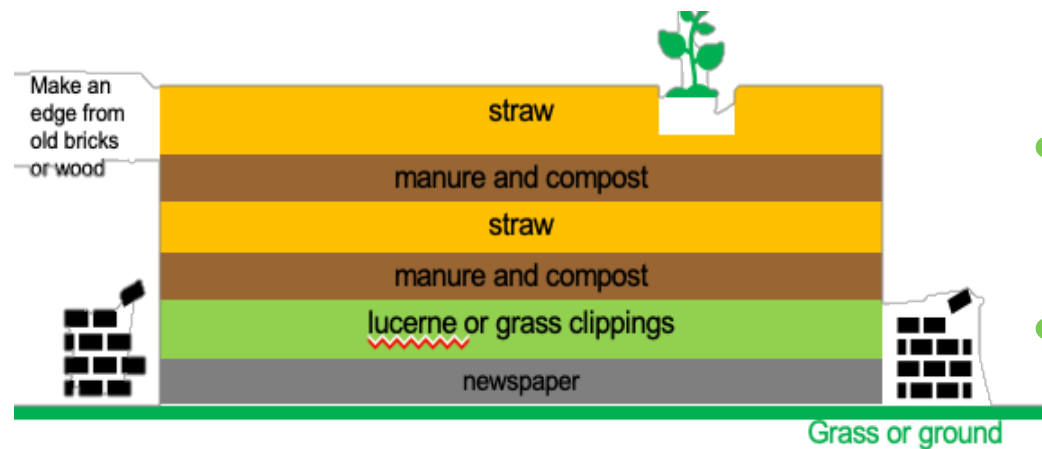
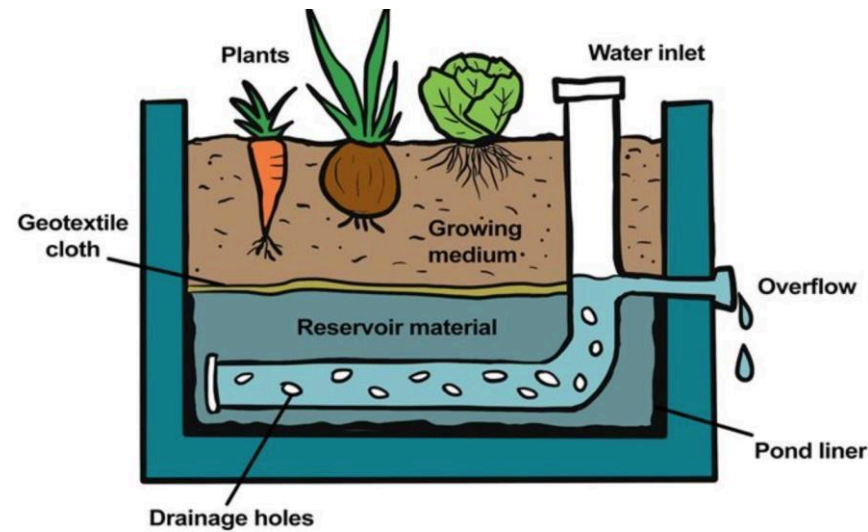
1. Lots of expertise all around us 
2. So much information it can be confusing 
3. Just start! (perfect is the enemy of good) 
4. No single, right way of doing things 
5. Don't worry because everything is changeable, and gardens are never finished!
6. You are going to kill things..... 
7. Gardeners are fabulous people, and they love to share 





Setting up your garden beds

Types of garden beds



- Raised beds: look nice, orderly, physically accessible
- Wicking beds: more expensive, good for holidays and hot, dry weather
- No-dig beds: quick, easy, relatively cheap.
- Beds in the ground (rows, square, circle beds): cheap and moderately easy but require a bit of digging, check soil for contaminants
- Containers, potting mix bags



Top tips for setting up garden beds.

1. Check what's best for your situation
2. Use what you have/what's local to you
3. Check any school requirements/regulations
4. I'm a fan of cheap and easy! (no-dig/ in ground)
5. Combination of beds?
6. Just start and work it out by trial and error



A pair of hands is shown from a top-down perspective, cupping a large amount of dark, rich, and crumbly soil. The soil is piled high in the palms and fingers. The background is a solid, vibrant green color. Two vertical yellow bars are positioned on the left and right sides of the image, extending from the top to the bottom. The text "Soil health" is centered over the soil in a white, sans-serif font.

Soil health

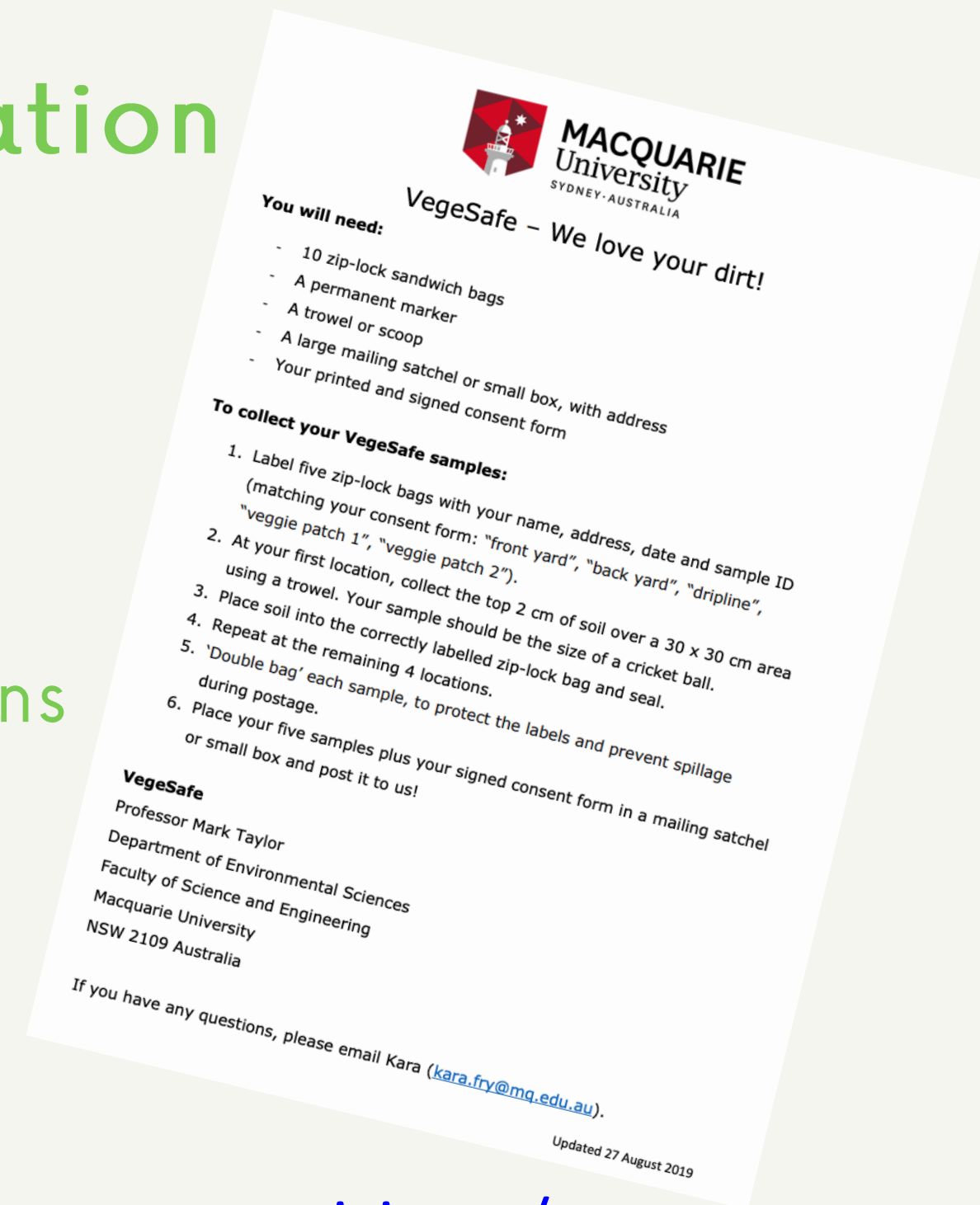


Top tips for healthy soil



1. Soil testing for accumulation of metal contaminants

- Vegesafe program at Macquarie University
- Consent form
- Collect samples - follow instructions
- \$20+ donation



<https://research.science.mq.edu.au/vegesafe/how-to-participate/>



Top tips for healthy soil

2. Buyer beware

- All purchased soil is pretty ordinary!
- Ask the supplier the pH of the soil
- Tell them it is for growing vegetables
- Ask about nutgrass!!
- Ask around for good experiences and supplier recommendations



💡 Top tips for healthy soil

3. Improve what you have

- Check the pH
- Work out your soil type for drainage (clay, sandy etc)
<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/soil-sleuth/12370192>
- Additives such as rock minerals/trace elements, organic matter (compost), bacteria, all round organic fertilizer, gypsum





Composting and worm farms



Top tips for composting



1. Don't over-complicate it!
2. Choose a set up that's right for you....
3. Green and brown waste (about equal parts nitrogen and carbon)
4. If it's been alive, you can compost it! (citrus, onions, rhubarb leaves)
 - Think more carefully about dairy/bread/meats
5. Cut stuff up smaller to speed up process
6. Add water regularly
7. Consider keeping mice out with vermin mesh
8. Turn to oxygenate but not essential





Top tips for worm farming

- Worm juice - a concentrated liquid fertilizer
- Worm castings (soil) - a slow-release fertilizer

1. Make your own worm farm (plastic or polystyrene boxes)

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/polystyrene-palace/13195908>

2. Certain species of worms - not any old worms

3. Keep it damp, out of hot sun

4. Cut stuff up smaller to be eaten faster

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/worm-farm-101/11325460>



Seasonal planting



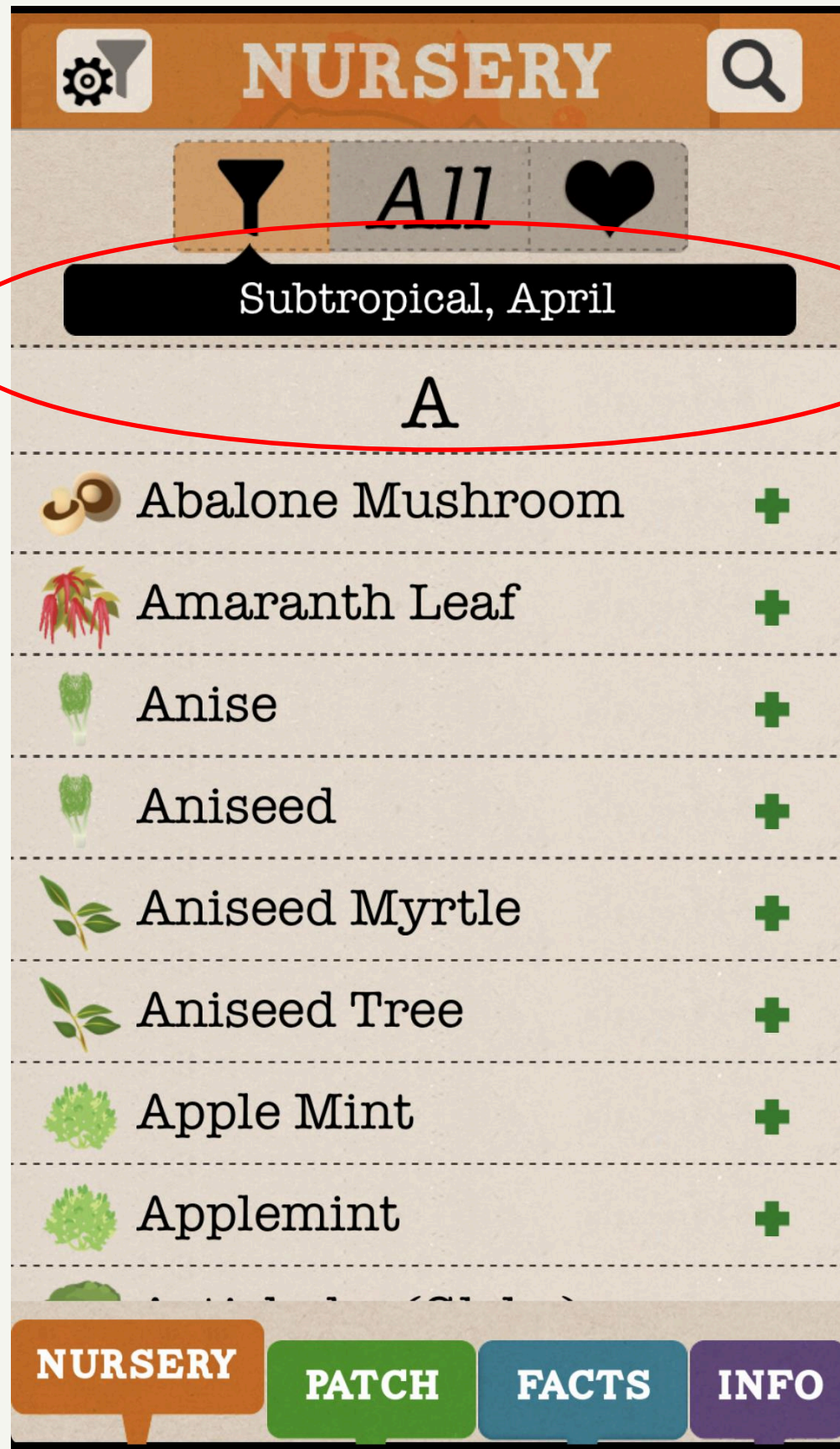
Top tips for planting

1. Investigate what grows well locally

- Subtropical environment
- Follow local (SEQ) permaculture teachers, horticulturists' advice but consider your own school environment and microclimate.
- Talk to neighbours, community gardens and local garden groups – sticky beak in other people's gardens!



Top tips for planting



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Planting in Australia - sub-tropical regions

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Amaranth (also <i>Love-lies-bleeding</i>)	Sow seed
Beans - climbing (also <i>Pole beans, Runner beans, Scarlet Runners</i>)	Sow seed
Beans - dwarf (also <i>French beans, Bush beans</i>)	Sow seed
Beetroot (also <i>Beets</i>)	Sow seed
Broad Beans (also <i>Fava bean</i>)	Sow seed
Broccoli	Plant out (transplant) seedlings
Burdock (also <i>Gobo (Japanese Burdock)</i>)	Sow seed

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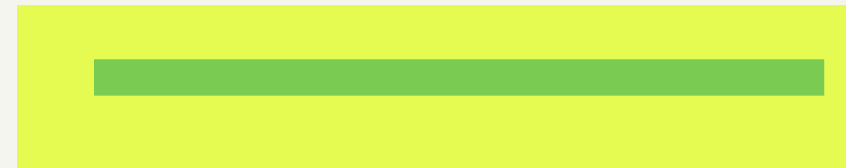
Top tips for planting

2. Choose seeds and plants sourced as locally as you can

- Reputable local suppliers mean disease free
E.g. Green Harvest, Eden Seeds, local nurseries
- Other gardeners in your neighbourhood
 - Down the track; save your own seed!

3. Observe, observe, observe and record.....
(aka trial and error)

- Rinse and repeat! (Remember to rotate your veg beds)





**Maintaining enthusiasm
and support**



Maintaining enthusiasm.....

1. Share the load – many hands make light work
 - Within the school (senior students, parents,)
 - Outside the school (e.g. volunteers over summer)
2. Embed things in the curriculum
3. Share your successes!
4. Use the garden as a venue for other things
5. Outsource if you need to.
6. No one will die if you take a season or a year off.

Free resources



- Brisbane horticulturists: Jerry Coleby Williams, Annette McFarlane, Linda Brennan
- Websites: Gardening Australia, Gardenate, Green Harvest, Eden Seeds, Earth Garden
- Youtube and websites: Morag Gamble



- Apps: Gardenate, Vegie Guide (Gardening Australia)
- Facebook groups: e.g. SEQ urban backyard food growers, SEQ permaculture
- Local garden clubs ? Eagleby Garden club, ROGI, BOGI



Questions?



Happy gardening 😊

Simone Johnston

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