

Check List for a Good Tractor Garden

Garden tractors can, of course, be used to advantage in almost any garden, but for most efficient use of tractor power, certain provisions should be made in laying out the garden plan:

1. **Make garden long and narrow** to provide long rows for tractor plowing, seedbed preparation and cultivation. A good proportion is half as wide as it is long — 50 by 100 feet, or 75 by 150 feet, for example.
2. **Run rows east and west** (preferably) so tall crops like corn can be placed on north side to avoid shading smaller crops.
3. **Locate garden where enclosing fence is not necessary**, if possible, or where ends are quickly removable, to simplify working with power equipment.
4. **Leave 6 to 10 feet of headlands** at each end, to provide turning room for the tractor at the end of rows. Headlands should be seeded to grass or cultivated to control weeds.
5. **Select level ground.** Tractor equipment will work better and can cultivate closer to small plants. On sloping land, run rows across the slope on the contour.
6. **Avoid low spots.** They stay wet while higher ground is ready to work, thus hampering tractor operations. Low areas also frost late in spring and early in fall.
7. **Select well-drained area**—for more efficient tractor operation and to produce greater yields.
8. **Choose rich, friable loam** — it's easier to plow and cultivate, and grows better crops. Heavy clay soils can be built up with manure and sand, and soil conditioners used where cost is economical.
9. **Select dark deep soils** without tight clay subsoil. Dark soils are high in organic matter and easier worked, except for clays.
10. **Provide "sweet" or slightly acid soils.** Test for limestone and other mineral deficiencies.
11. **Locate garden close to house and tractor equipment storage.** Saves steps, makes it easier to use power equipment at the right time.
12. **Place garden away from trees.** They rob the soil of minerals and water, and shade the crop. Where trees cannot be avoided, prune lower branches, fertilize heavily and irrigate crops.
13. **Provide full sunlight.** Don't let buildings or trees shade the garden area.
14. **Give a southern exposure.** Ground will dry out more quickly in the spring, so garden may be started earlier, and crops mature faster.
15. **Protect the garden** by buildings or windbreaks on the north. This also helps crops mature earlier.
16. **Consider irrigating with power equipment.** Supplying water during dry periods will often *double* the yield.

Soil is too dry when it plows up into large, hard lumps.



Soil is "just right" for plowing when ball of soil crumbles in the hand.

