

Crop Rotation Planning

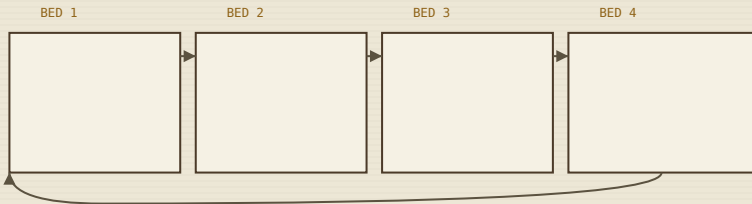
Move plant families around to break pest and disease cycles

DIFFICULTY Moderate
TYPE Ongoing planning practice
TIME Planning time, once a season

 DIFFICULTY Moderate	 TIME 1–2 hrs planning	 COST Free	 BEST SEASON Planned each season, ahead of planting	 FREQUENCY Every planting cycle
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01 Cycle plant families through beds

A simple 4-bed rotation moves related plant families through different beds each season, so pests and diseases that build up in the soil around one family don't have the same host waiting there again next year.



02 What you'll need

- At least 3–4 garden beds or defined zones
- A record of what was planted where each season
- A basic grouping of your crops by plant family (nightshades, brassicas, legumes, alliums, etc.)

03 Method

1. Group your crops by plant family — this matters more than by vegetable type alone.
2. Divide your growing space into at least 3–4 beds or zones.
3. Assign one plant family group per bed each season.
4. Each following season, move each family group to the next bed in the sequence.
5. Keep a simple written record — it's easy to forget the exact rotation after a year or two.

04 Troubleshooting

- **Not enough beds for a full rotation** — even a partial rotation (avoiding the same family in the same spot two years running) is better than none.
- **Forgot what was planted where** — keep a simple written log each season; it's the single biggest practical failure point.
- **Perennials disrupting the rotation** — plan permanent beds for perennial crops (asparagus, fruit trees, etc.) separately from the annual rotation.
- **Persistent soil-borne disease despite rotation** — some pathogens persist for many years; a 3–4 year rotation reduces but doesn't eliminate risk for the worst offenders like clubroot.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	Planned at the end of one season for the next, so beds are assigned before planting begins.
DURATION	An ongoing, multi-year cycle rather than a single-season task.
MAINTENANCE	Review and update the plan and written record every season.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	Reduced recurrence of soil-borne pests and diseases, and generally more consistent yields over time.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

Companion Planting Principles

Building Healthy Soil

COMMON MISTAKES

Rotating by vegetable type rather than plant family (e.g. not realising potato and tomato are the same family)

Losing track of the rotation sequence without a written record

PRO TIP

Legumes are an excellent bed to follow with heavy feeders like brassicas or corn — the nitrogen they leave behind gives the next crop a real boost.