

Speaker 1 ([00:01](#)):

Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. Not all of us have ideal garden plots. I know, I sure don't. And sometimes you just gotta deal with what you have. If you happen to have a yard or a garden area that's just a little bit shady or than you'd like, well take heart. You can still have a pretty darn successful garden even if you have a lot of shade. And today's episode, we're talking all things of veggies and shade, which ones will grow, what kind of shade and sunlight conditions you may have in your garden, and how to make sure you have the best chance possible of growing all the food you possibly can in your shady spots. I'm your host, Jill Winger and this is the podcast for the trailblazers, the Mavericks, the makers, the homesteaders, the modern pioneers, and the backyard farmers. If you've ever found yourself disenchanted with conformity and you kind of like to swim upstream while the rest of society rides the river of least resistance, well you have found your tribe.

Speaker 1 ([01:12](#)):

So unless you have followed me online for quite a while, you probably don't remember what our garden looked like before we put in our raised beds. Our raised beds are what we're kind of known for. They get a lot of attention, a lot of questions. But before those went in, we had a very traditional garden layout that would be the one I poisoned in case you remember that story. Anyway, in the center of that traditional garden was this beautiful tree and we knew it was there when we bought the house. We actually built the garden around the tree. Hindsight wasn't the best move, but I thought it would be fun, quote unquote, to have a tree in the middle of the garden. It looked nice sometimes, but what I realized is that it wasn't a great idea because of the shade and it messed up when we were rototilling.

Speaker 1 ([02:07](#)):

It just, it wasn't, it wasn't the best. But anyway, there was definitely some shady spots around the tree that I got to learn how to handle. So you may be able to relate to that, whether you have a tree in the middle of your garden or you live in an area with lots of shade trees. I know I've talked to folks who say, you know, I live in a place where there's tons of trees and my whole yard is shaded and I don't know what to plant. And my first thought is actual slight jealousy, not because they're having trouble planting, but because to live in a place where trees grow so prolifically is hard for me to imagine anymore living out here on the treeless Prairie. But all that aside, there are still things that you can grow if that is you, if you're living in a place with a lot of trees on your yard and you're limited in your garden plot area, you've got some options.

Speaker 1 ([03:00](#)):

I want you to know that there is hope. As long as your garden site has at least two hours of sunlight, there are vegetables you can grow and worst comes to worst, and you could always grow in pots, move it to a sunnier spot in your driveway or near your house. But for vegetables that grow in the shade, I want you to keep this simple rule in mind just so you kind of know this as you navigate the seed racks or the nursery. If the vegetable is grown for their leaves or their roots and that would be referring to things like lettuce. So it'd be leaf, right? Beet, which would be a root, a potato, which would be a root. They can grow in at least partial shade. Now on the flip side, if a vegetable is grown for their fruit, like things like tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, then they need to be grown in full sun.

Speaker 1 ([03:58](#)):

So you may not be able to get a ton of tomatoes in a shady spot, but you could do a lot of other things. Now, before you kind of start figuring out what vegetables you want to grow in the shady spot of yours,

we gotta break down your gardens sunlight conditions, because shade is not just shade, right? There's different types of shade, which yes, this is actually maybe a wee bit more complicated than you thought it would be at first glance. But stick with me because this isn't hard. I got you. We're going to do this. Okay. So the shade and the sunlight can change sometimes, depending on the season. Example, the tree in the middle of your garden might be bare in the winter or in the early spring when you're planning or planting. But then with summer coming, it's going to have the leaves and it's gonna give you way more shade than it did before because it's filled out.

Speaker 1 ([04:50](#)):

The sun can hit your land at a little bit different angle in the summer and the winter depending on how your garden is positioned and the season. And a plant might only shade your garden spot for a few hours each day. And it depends on when and, and depending on when it shades your garden, it can change what you grow. So an example of that would be a tree might only give afternoon shade, which is actually perfect for lettuce and salad greens. Because they don't like a lot of hot weather. So you might want to plant, I don't know, your spinach in that spot that gets that afternoon shade and it will potentially help your spinach crop be even better. Now the best way obviously to figure this out, is to observe it throughout an entire year. And I don't expect you to be out there every day taking notes, but just, just be watching.

Speaker 1 ([05:41](#)):

If you have the luxury of a little bit of time before you start to plant, just be paying attention to what the different areas of your garden or your yard look like, throughout the seasonal changes. So you might have full shade, which is just like, it sounds zero sun, uh, ever. And that would not be a good spot for growing vegetables because all plants need at least a little bit of light. So we'd want to cross that spot out. Light shade would be a spot that receives one to two hours of sunlight each day. So some varieties of vegetables like lettuces, spinach, the kale, the leafy greens, those are a good option there. We have partial shade, which would be some place that receives two to six hours of sunlight or has like dappled sunlight, like has maybe a tree with some sparser leaves.

Speaker 1 ([06:38](#)):

So you get at dappled sunlight coming through, but it's not just full blazing sun and that, that has a lot of potential. So that's, that's a good one to have. And then lastly, of course we have full sun. That would be six or more hours of direct sunlight each day. Most of the vegetables that really need that full sun, like a tomato plant are really gonna want the eight hours, but it kind of depends on your climate. So once again, it's full shade, light shade, partial shade, and full sun. So kinda categorize your spot according to those categories. Again, don't go crazy with the specifics, just get a rough estimate. Now as far as the exact vegetables you can grow, there's actually quite a list and there's a lot of different details that go into the list as to what type of vegetable variety, and what type of shade it can handle.

Speaker 1 ([07:35](#)):

So we actually have a whole list over on the blog and I'm going to drop a link in the show notes to that blog post and you could just go either print it off if you want or read through it. I think that would be easier than me going through like 29 vegetables and boring you to death as you listened to this podcast. A few examples though, would be arugula, right? Arugula is good, lettuce, spinach, kale, uh, chard, mustard greens, any of those leafy plants are going to be really good options. Bush beans can grow in partial shade because they need, four or five hours of sun to be productive. So those could be an option

if you have a little bit more sun in your spot, beets can grow in three to four hours of sunlight. The less sunlight they receive, the smaller the beetroot will be.

Speaker 1 ([08:29](#)):

But you can still get the beet tops or the beet greens no matter what. So, and smaller beets are actually usually better, a little bit sweeter, a little less tough. So it's not a bad idea to try growing beets in the shade. Broccoli is another good option. Brussels sprouts, carrots, cauliflower. Again, I won't go through the whole list, but any of those you probably can get a little bit creative with some placement, as long as you have shade or dappled shade and make it work. I think I have said shade so much in this episode so far. It feels like a tongue twister and it doesn't even sound like a word anymore. Have you ever had that happen? That is what is happening to me at this moment. Moving on. I'm trying to find some synonyms for shade and I'm just coming up dry.

Speaker 1 ([09:14](#)):

So a few tips for you as you pick your vegetables and grow in these less than sunny locations. So, definitely start your shade tolerant veggies indoors. Maybe not the greens necessarily, but germinating is a little bit tougher in shady spots. So start them inside, give them a good strong start and then transplant them. And I honestly, I start, most of my veggies, or a good portion indoors anyway, so that really isn't much of a stretch. You do want to make sure, just like with any vegetable, they have really good soil. But it's even more important for the shaded spots, to make sure they have good compost, good nutrition, and that can help counteract the fact that they're going to be getting less sunlight. And if you don't know if your soil is good or not, you're not sure, you can do a simple soil test.

Speaker 1 ([10:10](#)):

I have a blog post on that process. It's way easy, not expensive, and I'll link that in the show notes if you want to go check it out. Also, keep an eye out for pests. The damp soil, the darkness, like slugs and snails, they're a fan. So you want to be vigilant for the first signs of those guys putting up camp in your shady areas of your garden. There's different pest control sprays you can use. There's lots of different strategies, kind of depending on the pest, but just, just be prepared. You might have a little bit more of that, not just, not necessarily, but it's a possibility. I'm also know that if you have automatic watering in your garden, like we have our drip system, you may need less water in the shady areas cause it just doesn't evaporate as quickly. So adjust that accordingly.

Speaker 1 ([11:04](#)):

And of course if you're watering by hand, that's a little bit easier. And lastly know that it could, the shade could affect them, the rate that the vegetables mature, so less sunlight is going to mean that it potentially slows down the growth of your plants just a little bit. So you may need to be a little bit more patient as you're waiting for that final harvest. So anyway, those are just some of my tips. I know that, with my shady spots in the garden, whether it was with my tree incident or I have some pine trees that hang over my current garden, we're still able to grow, onions in those spots and really healthy crops of greens and potatoes and beets and carrots with some partial shade situation. I know it can be done and it's worth just a little bit more, the research that it requires to figure it out and it'll just make you a more knowledgeable gardener in the process. And if there's one thing I have learned from this homestead journey, that there is almost always a way to make your situation work if you're just willing to think outside of the box and be a little bit creative.

Speaker 1 ([12:23](#)):

So my friend, maybe you're not quite digging out in the garden just yet. I know I am not because there is still snow on the ground, but odds are you're probably in the thick of planning and dreaming and buying all the seeds and to make your garden planning process just a little bit easier, whether you're a newbie or an experienced gardener. I have put together a little packet of garden planning printables as well as a list of some of my very favorite vegetable varieties. And you can grab the whole thing for free over [theprairiehomestead.com/gardenplan](http://theprairiehomestead.com/gardenplan). And that's it. Don't forget to hit subscribe. So all the new episodes show up automatically in your podcast player. And if you enjoyed today's episode, I would be so grateful. If you take just a minute to leave, a quick review or rating, it just helps other people find this podcast and start their own homestead journey. Thanks so much for listening. I appreciate you being here hanging out with me and we'll chat again on the next episode of the old fashioned on purpose podcast.

Speaker 1 ([28:53](#)):

Gardening season has begun or almost begun depending on where you live and if you are looking for a reliable source of seeds. Look no further than true leaf market. I discovered this company last year when I was on the hunt for cover crop seeds and I am beyond impressed with them. They have a huge selection of affordably priced veggies, flowers and micro greens seeds, and they have a ton of organic heirloom and non-GMO varieties. Head on over to the [Prairie homestead.com/seeds](http://Prairiehomestead.com/seeds) to have a look around and grab a packet or 12 to complete your seed stash for the year.