



A weekly question/answer column

**How Far Apart Should I Plant My Carrots
From My Beets?**

Jerry Goodspeed answers:*

It is survival of the fittest in the plant kingdom. Every plant requires a certain amount of space for optimal growth and production. Plants that are too close together compete with one another for air, light, nutrients and water. They end up expending too much energy competing and not enough energy growing and producing. To help prevent this, consider these tips:

- Always be sure to read individual package directions for spacing requirements.
- When planting vegetables, pay close attention to the spacing requirements between plants and between rows. More plants will not produce more food if the space is limited. Corn is an example of competition that reduces food production. If planted too closely together, there will be smaller plants and ears, and the amount of corn will be reduced, even if there are more plants per square foot.
- Other crops that are commonly planted too closely include carrots, beets, tomatoes, squash, pumpkins and watermelons. Carrot seeds are so small that they are often over-planted unintentionally. Most carrots should be thinned to one carrot every 2 inches. Beets are usually thick because each seed is actually three to four seeds clustered together. They should be thinned to give each plant 4 inches to grow. If left thick, beets and carrots will be misshapen and small.
- Pumpkins and squash are often over-planted because people forget from year to year how large the plants get. Each pumpkin and winter squash plant needs a space of about 4 feet square.

*Jerry Goodspeed is Utah State University Extension Horticulturist