

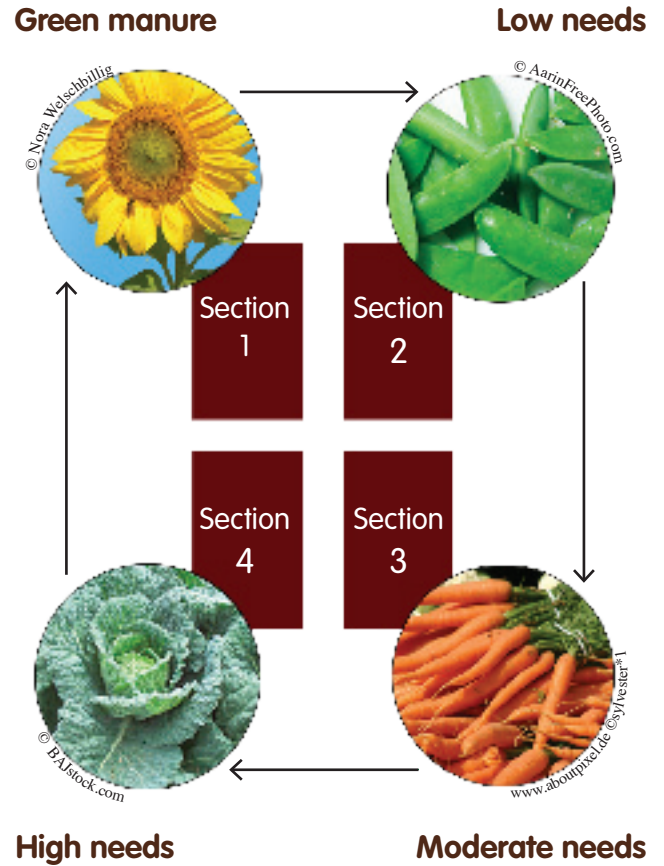
Crop Rotation

For more than a millennium, man has applied the principle of crop rotation to avoid the depletion of nutrients in the soil; a crop of winter wheat was followed by spring cereals and then the field was left to lie fallow. Today, the system is more elaborate. It is possible to differentiate three types of vegetables based on their nutrient requirements: the vegetables that need a soil rich in nutrients such as cabbage or celery, vegetables that grow in a soil that is moderately rich in nutrients such as spinach or lettuce and vegetables that grow in nutritionally poor soil such as legumes/pulses. The alteration, or rotation, of these three crop categories helps to maintain a healthy and fertile soil.

The three year rotation is the most prevalent today. The vegetable garden is divided into three sections: the first section is for plants that have low nutritional needs, the second is for plants with moderate needs, and the third for those needing a nutritionally rich soil. The following year the crops are rotated to the next section. After four years, you are back to the initial starting point. If you fertilise the section that has been used for plants that need a nutritionally rich soil with organic fertiliser (e.g. compost), it will not need to be left fallow for the next year.

During a four year rotation, plants are alternated on four sections. Each year, green manure is planted in one section and left to lie fallow, or the section is left to regenerate naturally without the addition of fertilizer.

However, there are some plants that are the exception and don't like to be rotated. Strawberries and asparagus grow better if they remain in the same section for a period of 3 and 8 to 10 years respectively. Tomatoes prefer to be planted in the same location each year.



Partition of the sections in first year of a four year cycle. Each year the crops are rotated to the next section. Thus, for the second year, the green manure is planted in section 2. The plants that require low and moderate nutrition are planted in section 3 and 4 respectively, and the plants that have high nutritional needs are planted in section 1.

High nutritional needs	Moderate nutritional needs	Low nutritional needs
Large cabbages (white cabbage, red cabbage, cauliflower...) Cucumbe Potatoes Pumpkin/Squash Leek Celery Tomatoes Courgette	Fennel Garlic Kohlrabi Carottes Radish Beetroot Lettuce Spinach Onions	Legumes/Pulses (Beans, peas, lentils...) Strawberries Aromatic herbs

