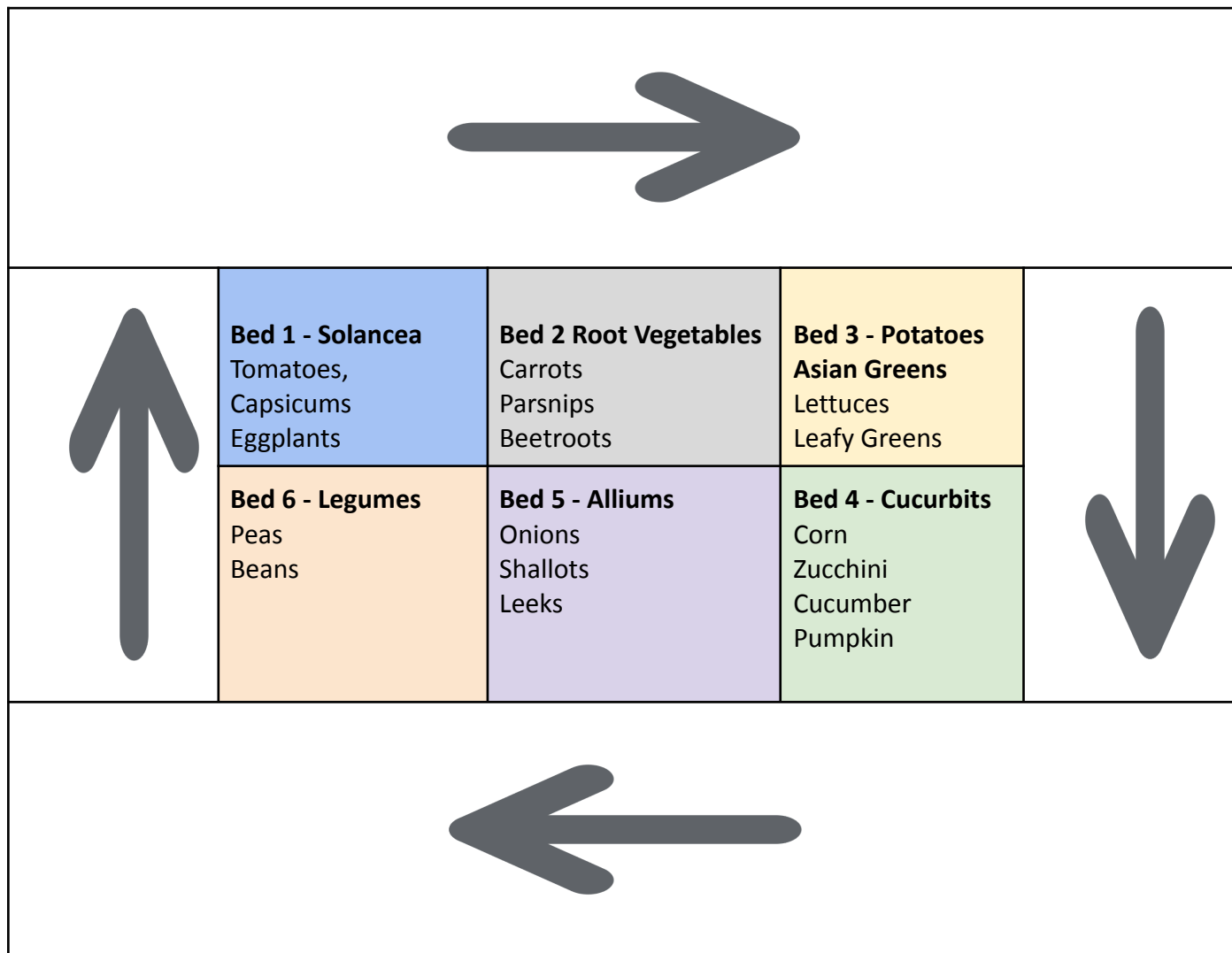


## HOW TO ROTATE YOUR CROPS

The best way to keep soil fertile and pest- and disease free is to rotate crops so, over the years, a range of veggies pass through each bed. Here is the six-bed system we use on TV (Gardening Australia 2005).

To rotate the crops, follow the arrows. For instance, the peas and beans from bed 6 would move to bed 1 next spring. If you have fewer beds, combine a grouping in one.



## Bed 1

**What Crops:** This bed is for growing tomatoes, capsicums and eggplants.

**Before planting:** These crops prefer acidic soil, so avoid adding lime, which makes soil more alkaline and locks out iron. They have a low need for nitrogen, so use sheep and cow or horse manure rather than chook droppings.

**Care notes:** Trickle sulphate of potash around each tomato every 6 weeks to induce early flowering and more flavour. Support vigorous tomato varieties with stakes and allow small types to flop on top of the mulch. After harvesting, lime the soil.



## Bed 2

**What Crops:** Root Vegetables go in this bed – carrots, parsnip and beetroot. Swedes and turnips can also be sown, even a few square meters can be massive.

**Before Planting:** Avoid adding excessive amounts of high fertiliser and organic matter to this particular bed as they cause root vegetables to fork.

**Care Notes:** They must be grown from seeds sown directly where they are to grow. If seedlings are planted, they will bolt to seed straight after being transplanted.



## Bed 3

**What Crops:** Plant Potatoes in half this bed and a leafy vegetable, such as lettuces, silver beet and Asian brassicas, including pak choi and Chinese broccoli, in the other.

**Before Planting:** Spread sheep or cow manure over the surface.

**Care Notes:** Always use certified seed potatoes to avoid introducing diseases. Grow them under enriched straw or plant directly into the soil. In summer, give leaf crops plenty of water and liquid manure to encourage rapid growth. If combining beds, remember that potatoes make companions for pumpkins.



## Bed 4

**What Crops:** Grow Sweet Corn, preferable from seed, in one half of the bed and pumpkin and cucurbits, such as zucchinis and cucumbers, in the other half. These are perfect companions, producing better quality yields that are less likely to be attacked by pests and diseases.

**Before Planting.** These plants thrive if a good dressing of animal manure is applied and left to mature while the previous bed is harvested.

**Care Notes:** For healthy crops, be generous with compost, manure and fertiliser throughout the season.

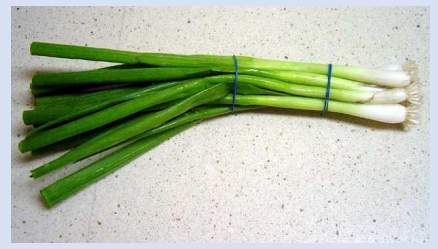


## Bed 5

**What Crops:** Alliums, such as onions, leeks, and shallots, go in this bed. Hold off on planting garlic for now – it goes into this bed during autumn and early winter.

**Before Planting:** Lime this bed if soil is acidic (lower pH6) or has not been limed for many years.

**Care Notes:** Onions are one of the few plants that do not like being mulched with organic matter – they are best left to grow in uncovered soil. If combining beds, do not plant onions next to peas or beans – they may develop a thick neck, which means they don't store well.

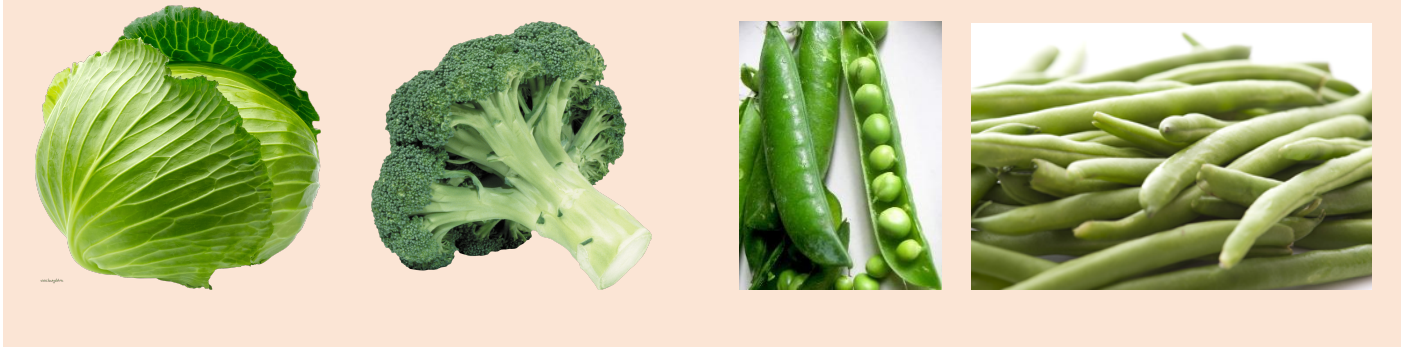


## Bed 6

**What Crops:** Peas and Beans provide delicious food and, like all legumes, their roots replenish the nitrogen content in the soil at the same time. As the crops are harvested, plant lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, silver beet and other leafy vegetables in their place.

**Before Planting:** if it wasn't done after the tomatoes were harvested in autumn, lime the soil with dolomite now.

**Care Notes:** Climbing beans can grow at least 2 meters tall. So they need to be secured to a growing frame or trellis. All peas need to be able to climb, otherwise cropping is poor.



**Grow Green Manure**, in late autumn and early winter sow seeds of hardy legumes, like tic beans or yellow peas, and green manure as wheat or barley, into empty beds. Dig them in at the end of winter while lush. In the tropics, grow black sunflower. Please start at bed one again. Plant Bed 6 into bed 1.