A successful garden needs regular attention

Feeding and watering your garden regularly and watching out for pests and diseases are all part of maintaining a beautiful and fruitful garden. Here are some ways in which you can achieve success.

Replenish your soil
A soil rich in organic matter attracts earthworms, which aerate the soil and fertilise it with their castings. To keep your soil rich in organic matter:
- Use organic fertilisers. A good example is compost (see page 52). Other organic fertilisers are old dried manure, bonemeal and hoof-and-horn meal.
- If you use synthetic fertilisers, choose slow release fertilisers as they will have a less dramatic effect on the soil chemistry.
- Leave fallen leaves on flowerbeds. They reduce weed growth and act as a mulch.
- Keep the soil well mulched with organic mulches such as pine needles, bark chips and lawn clippings.

Rotate your vegetables
To prevent pests and the build-up of diseases in the soil, avoid planting the same kinds of vegetables in the same place every year. To do this, it is best to have at least three vegetable beds. Plant as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st year</th>
<th>2nd year</th>
<th>3rd year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bed 1: Legumes – peas and beans</td>
<td>Bed 1: Root vegetables</td>
<td>Bed 1: Leaf crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed 2: Leaf crops</td>
<td>Bed 2: Legumes</td>
<td>Bed 2: Root vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed 3: Root vegetables</td>
<td>Bed 3: Leaf crops</td>
<td>Bed 3: Legumes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marigolds are helpful against soil nematodes.
Pest remedies
Some plants have a strong smell that helps keep pests away from your food garden. Here are some examples of helpful plants.
• Lavender deters ants.
• Basil deters the tomato fly.
• Parsley is disliked by snails and slugs.
• Marigolds are helpful against soil nematodes.
• Petunias deter a wide variety of beetles.
• Nasturtiums attract aphids away from other plants such as roses.
• Garlic protects strawberries, cucumbers and tomatoes from fungal disease.
• Plant lilies, lavender, thyme and catmint among your roses to deter aphids, snails and ants.

Good plant combinations
Did you know that if certain plants are grown next to each other, they make vegetable garden maintenance easier? They grow better, have fewer pest problems and often taste better.
Here are some good companion plants:
• Beetroot with onions.
• Carrots with peas, lettuce, onions or strawberries.
• Cabbage with potatoes, beetroots or onions.
• Pumpkin with mealies.
• Mealies with peas, beans, potatoes.
• Mealies, beans and tomatoes.
• Sweet potatoes and beans.

Plant lavender to deter ants. (PIC: Shirley)