

# The Market Gardening Model

"Making a Living" on a Small Piece of Land



## What is a Market Garden?

- Less than 3 acres of cultivated land (most just 1 1/2 acres or less).
- Characterized by intensive beds and multiple crops/bed/year
- Takes advantage of season extension and often goes year round.
- Usually very diverse - eggs not in 1 basket.

# Advantages:

- Less land needed
- Less water needed
- Less equipment needed
- Less STRESS needed (not so overwhelming)
- More people can make a living off the land



# Keys to Success:

- Intensive production -  
(multiple crops each year)
  - tight spacing
  - beds rather than rows
  - high value crops





## Keys to Success (cont.):

- **Highly fertile soil**
  - get soil tested
  - amend as recommended
  - grow cover crops
  - make compost



## Keys to Success (cont.)

- **Season Extension**

- row covers

- low tunnels

- hoophouses

- transplants (most everything transplanted)

# Keys to Success (cont.)

- Efficiency
  - Use specialized tools
  - functional layout - standardization of space and materials.
  - work smarter not harder



# Keys to Success (cont.)

- Direct Sales
  - Eliminate the middlemen
  - Farmer's Market
  - CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)
  - High-end restaurants





## Keys to Success (cont.)

### ● Planning

- Know how much money you need to make
- Know how much you need to plant
- Know when it needs to be planted
- Have a succession of plantings to keep a continuous harvest.



## Size of Garden:

- “Always tend the smallest amount of land possible, but tend it exceptionally well.”
- At least one full-time worker per 1/2 acre
- Income potential of \$100,000+ per acre!



## Location

- Ideally within 1 hour's drive of a major metropolitan area - if growing perishables
- Good water source
- Good sun exposure
- Good soil
- Fairly level

## Garden Layout:

- Beds 30" wide & 100' long (or something that easily goes into 100)
- Pathways 12"-18" wide
- Blocks of beds - for crop rotation purposes. We like 10 beds per pad





## High Value Crops:

- Curtis Stone's Crop Value Rating (CVR)
  - Short days to maturity (60 or less)
  - High yield per linear foot (1/2 lb.)
  - High price/pound (min. \$4/lb.)
  - Long harvest period (4 month min.)
  - Popularity (high demand/low market saturation)

## Crops With High CVR:

- Arugula - CVR 5/5
- Beets - CVR 4/5
- Carrots - CVR 4/5
- Kale - CVR 4/5
- Lettuce - CVR 5/5
- Microgreens - CVR 4/5
- Radishes - CVR 4/5
- Baby Kale - CVR 5/5
- Salad Mix - CVR 5/5
- Turnips - CVR 5/5
- Spinach - CVR 5/5
- Tomatoes - CVR 3/5

## Infrastructure Needs(?):

- Heated greenhouse for seed starting
- Washing area - cement slab with roof and 3 bay sink or feed troughs
- Walk-in cooler
- Hoophouse (or 2 or 3)
- Water for washing area and irrigation
- Deer fencing



## Specialized Equipment:

- Broadfork
- BCS with attachments (or small tractor)
- wheel hoe
- quality hand tools
- Precision seeders
- Greens harvester



## Start-Up Costs:

- Eliot Coleman - \$15,000 (1995)
- Jean-Martin Fortier - \$39,000 (2014)
- Whatever God gives you....

