

A Birds-Eye View of Market Gardening



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 high value crops/bed/year
- Takes advantage of season extension and often goes year round.
- Usually very diverse - eggs not in 1 basket.

Is This the Only Model?

- No! There's no "one size fits all"
- If you have access to lots of land and tractor availability, then go for it!
- But, I think the Market Gardening model fits very nicely with the SOP model

Why?

- Families working together (not a need for lots of outside help)
- Agricultural Evangelism
- Great way to build relationships



GW 363.2

- Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."

GW 363.3 / MH 143

- There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen...

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:

1. Intensive production - (multiple crops each year)

- tight spacing
- beds rather than rows
- focus on high value crops



A close-up photograph of dark brown soil with visible roots and small green plants, serving as the background for the left side of the slide.

Keys to Success (cont.)

2. Highly fertile soil

- get soil tested
- amend as recommended
- grow cover crops
- make compost
- Put more in than you are taking out



Keys to Success (cont.)

3. Season Extension

- row covers
- low tunnels
- hoophouses
- transplants (most everything transplanted)

Keys to Success (cont.)

4. Efficiency

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



Keys to Success (cont.)

5. Direct Sales

- Eliminate the middlemen
- Farmer's Market
- CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)
- High-end restaurants (Pre-COVID)
- Some finding success with wholesale (local grocers, etc.)



Keys to Success (cont.)

6. 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 8 beds per block/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)
- Daniel Mays - \$30,000 yr. 1, \$70,000 for yrs. 2-4 (2020)
- Whatever God gives you....



Where Do You Go From Here?

- Read/Watch/Listen to recommended resources.
- Spend time working with people who are making a living doing this. (Ideally a few years!)
- Tour farms
- Go to conferences
- Start growing
- Make sure God is leading you!