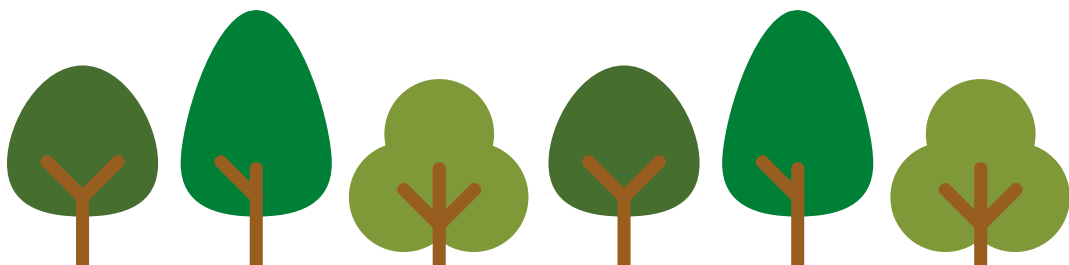
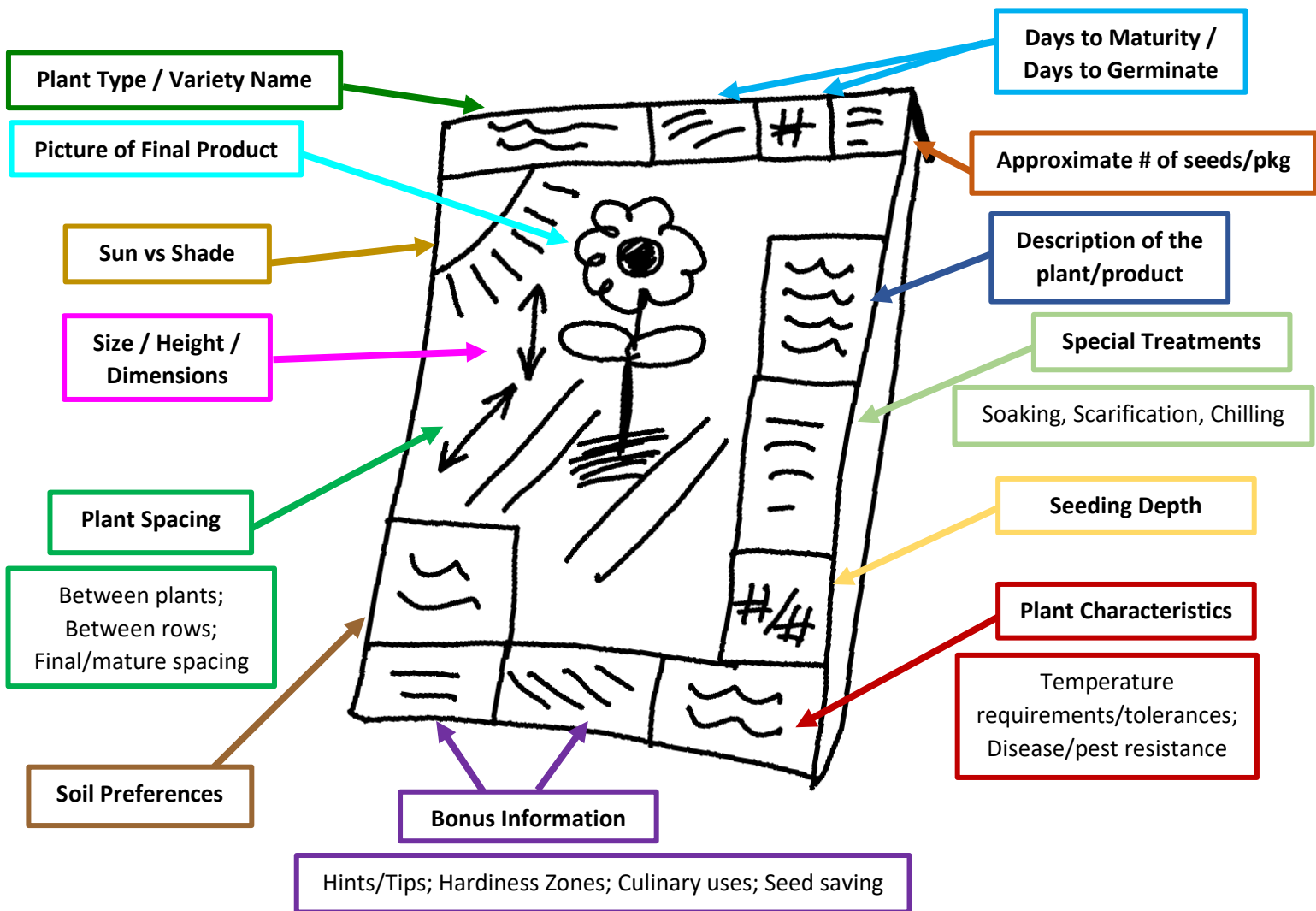




Homegrown Horticulture

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Deciphering the Seed Packet





Spencer Horticultural Solutions

Homegrown Horticulture

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

The seed packet contains a whole bunch of information that can be useful in successfully growing a “new-to-you” vegetable or variety. Here are some of the things that might be on a seed package and what they mean.

Plant Type / Variety Name – Might include the plant type, the Latin (botanical) name, and the specific variety or cultivar name. This useful in being able to differentiate between plants with similar names.

Picture of final product – Most helpful when choosing the plants you want to grow, as you can get a sense of their final shape, colour, how they might vary if they are a mix (e.g. flowers)

A description of the plant/product – Includes things like whether they are annual or perennial, some information about the final product (colour, uses, etc.), how it grows, yields, etc.

Sun versus Shade – Useful in deciding where the plant might grow best, and how much sun will be required

Plant characteristics – This includes information on disease/pest resistance, any specific temperature requirements or tolerances, tendency for bolting, etc.

Days to Maturity – An estimation of the time to harvest, which should be used as a general guideline, not gospel truth

Days to Germinate – Indicates how long to expect the seeds to take to germinate and emerge (estimate)

Plant Size – Provides overall dimensions of the mature plant, such as how tall and wide it will eventually be

Seeding Depth – How deep should you put the seeds in the soil to ensure that they emerge? Generally, smaller seeds are seeded shallow and larger seeds deeper

Plant Spacing – Includes how far apart to plant seeds and how far apart rows should be to provide adequate space for the plants to mature. It also includes how far apart mature plants should be, which relates to thinning seedlings that were planted more heavily

Soil types (preferences) – Gives an indication the preference for soil texture (heavy = clay, light = sandy); usually includes drainage preferences.

When to seed indoors for transplanting – If a plant is suitable for transplanting, this number will indicate how long it will take to get a properly sized/aged transplant. It also gives clues as to temperature requirements.

Bonus Information:

Hints / Tips – Might include information on hilling/mounding, picking times, or other ways to have success

Special Treatments – Might include a period of soaking, chilling, or some other treatment that will improve germination

Planting Zone / Hardiness Zone – For perennial plants (usually flowers), this will give you clues about whether the plant should survive in your region

Approximate number of seeds/package – Helps you figure out how much area you will be able to seed

Culinary uses – This might give you information on suitability for different uses in cooking (e.g. salsa vs fresh eating)

Information about seed saving – You might find information on how to collect seeds of this plant, for using next year

