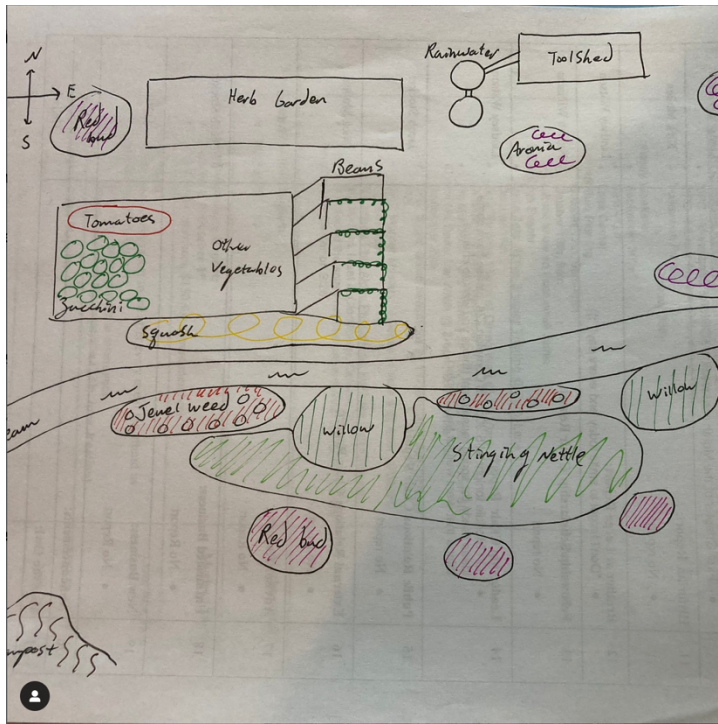


I will plant aronia because it is an attractive bush that provides ecological value as a food source for birds as well as a rich source of antioxidants which can be made into syrup or tincture comparable to elderberries. I will plant stinging nettle because it is highly nutritious, requires very little tending, and like many plants on this list it is native to my area. Jewelweed and willow will be planted in a wet area to help control water infiltration and mitigate erosion. Jewelweed is a mucilaginous plant that is excellent for soothing itching or external irritation, while willow is an abundant source of salicylic acid which is a natural precursor to aspirin and can be prepared as a tea to help manage pain. Willow trees are also a good source of auxins, a plant hormone that is critical in the rooting process of cuttings. Making a tea from willow tips produces a rudimentary rooting compound that can be used to propagate other plants.

Red bud trees will be planted along perimeters because they have beautiful edible flowers, provide light shade to delicate understory plants, and fix atmospheric nitrogen in the soil. I will plant daikon radishes as a cover crop to help loosen compacted soil without tilling. I will trellis green beans and sugar peas over a bed where cool weather crops like kale and spinach are planted in order to shade them from the sun. Squash will grow around the perimeter of this trellised bed to control weeds and keep the soil cool during the summer.

I will plant tomatoes and peppers with marigolds and peppermint. Tomatoes and peppers are generally prolific fruiting plants, and the companion flowers will help discourage pests without artificial chemicals. An herb garden will be planted in poorer soil higher on a slope to ensure appropriate drainage. Included will be thyme, basil, rosemary, parsley, sage, lavender, dill, oregano, and lemonbalm. Not only are these herbs tasty, but many also have medicinal value as well. Lavender for example is soothing as a tea or bath and can help relieve stress.

Planting will be organized to prioritize water and light requirements. Initially the soil will be amended to accommodate the water needs of each bed, but after the initial planting soil disturbances will be kept to a minimum to allow mycorrhizae to establish healthy colonies and to prevent compaction. Yard waste without disease will be collected and composted with kitchen scraps and mushroom substrate. Rainwater will be collected in barrels and used to supplement the watering needs of the garden. By relying on the health and resilience of the garden environment instead of forcing it to rely on me we both benefit.



tragicomedies

tragicomedies Here is a rough sketch for a garden idea I had. Gardens are a wonderful way to take ownership of where your food comes from as well as how you can coexist with the environment. In this design I considered the plants' water and light needs as well as how they can benefit and support one another. I also included infrastructural elements like a compost pile and rain barrels. Plan a dream garden! It won't hurt!

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