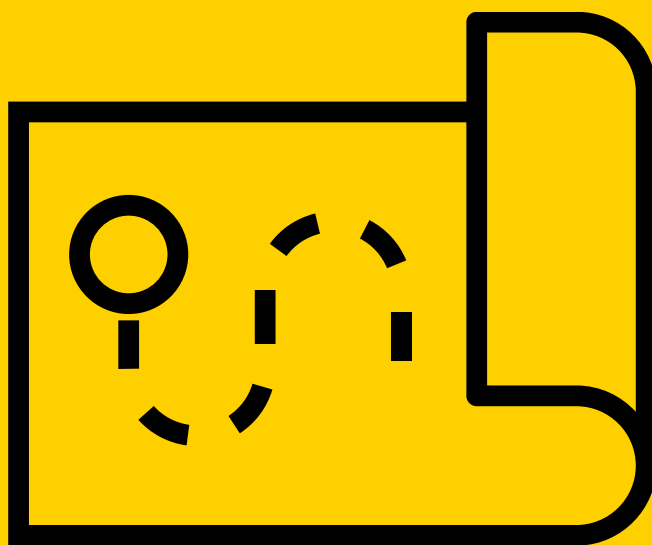




GROWER'S PATHFINDER



Brought to you by the
VEGETABLE ACADEMY

INTRODUCTION

Growing food is a lifelong endeavour.

It's great to have big dreams for your garden, but when you realize the sheer volume of knowledge you need to learn and the seemingly endless list of possibilities for your garden space, it can be hard to decide which projects or problems to tackle next. In these moments, it is helpful to remind yourself of your biggest motivators and roadblocks so everything is on the table. Then an experienced mentor will be able to help accelerate your learning curve and set you on a course for success.

This workbook is designed to accompany the mini lesson on our third major breakthrough in the free workshop. The exercises and resources introduced here will help you identify the most effective next steps you can take to bring you garden dreams to life. Watch the video lesson for more guidance and examples on this subject.

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YOUR STARTING POINT

The next step depends on where you are now.

No one is born a master gardener, but the skillset required for successful vegetable growing can be learned by anyone. Before we talk about the most appropriate next steps for you, it will help to get clear about your motivation and current roadblocks.

First, I want you to remind yourself why you want to grow your own food in the first place. This motivation needs to come from your heart and it needs to be firm enough to overcome minor setbacks you are bound to encounter on your road to vegetable growing bliss.

My inner drive comes from...



Next let's try to identify the major factors that have been holding you back so far. These factors will be different for each person so I will make no attempt to put words into your mind. Just make sure you're being honest with yourself here. What is actually standing between you and your dream garden?



So far, my major roadblocks have been...

Now that we've got your starting point nailed down, we can talk about what it will take for you to make progress. The following pages help you identify the most appropriate strategies to use to overcome your roadblocks as soon as possible.

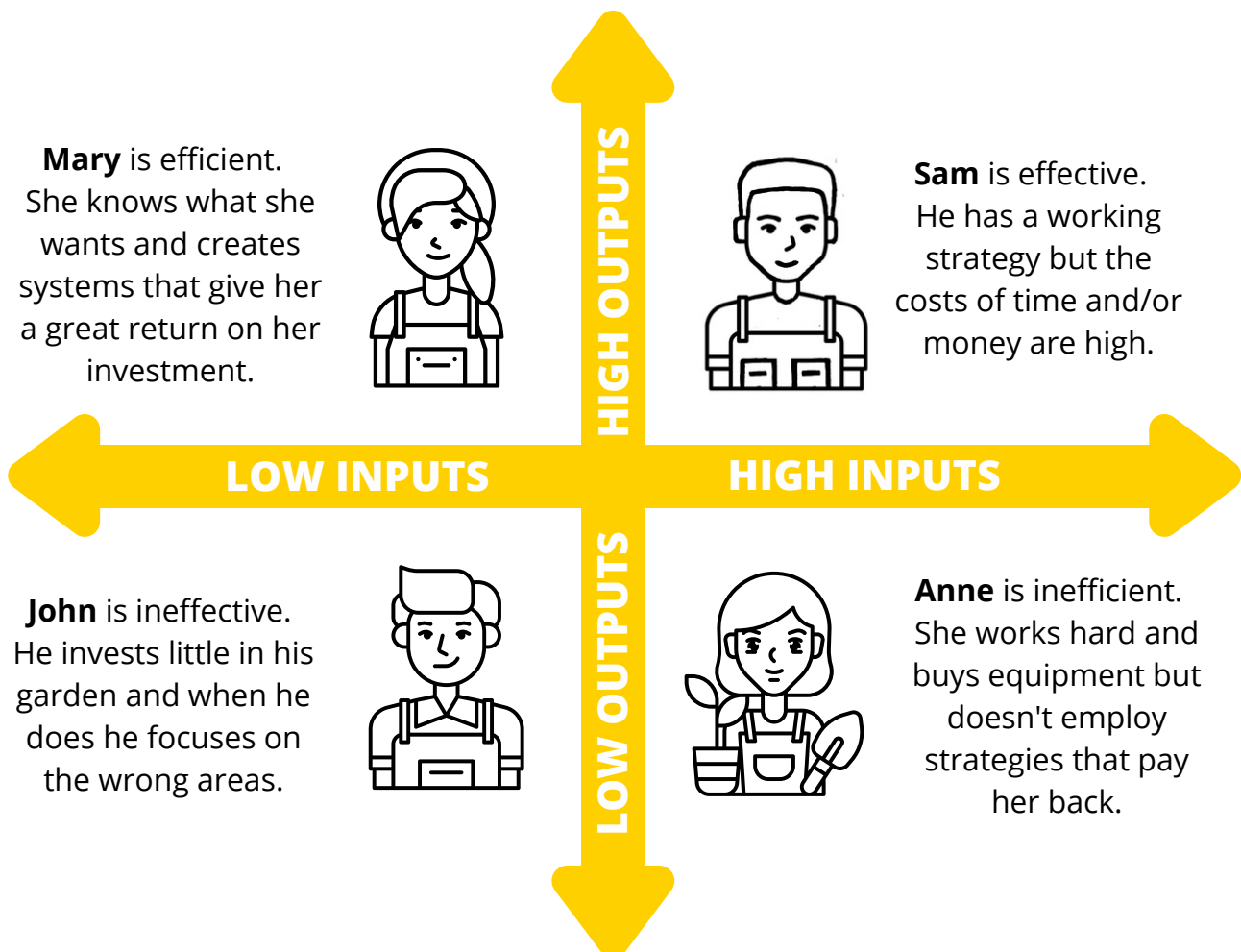
PATHFINDER EXERCISE

Commitment is easiest when you are committing to success.

Whether you are growing a vegetable garden for the fun of it or for a dependable source of food, you probably want your efforts to be fruitful. A lot of people have trouble committing to their garden because the systems they are using are unproductive and labour intensive. I would have trouble committing to that too. This exercise will help you identify your current position and suggest the next steps for you to take in your vegetable garden to make your work easier and more productive.

Garden Performance Matrix

Consider the position of each gardener below and decide which one best matches your style of garden production right now. Then flip the page for a list of personalized recommendations.



Accelerate Your Learning Curve

Most gardeners start in a scenario like John or Anne, but eventually we want to end up in Mary's position, where our garden produces a high output with a low input. This is the only scenario that will lead to a high level of satisfaction and it's this satisfaction that will make it much easier for you to commit to vegetable growing in the long run.

So how does someone like John, Anne, or Sam accelerate their learning curve and start to grow more like Mary? First identify the grower you relate to best. Then get started with the list of specific strategies recommended for someone in this position.

Your inputs are high but your outputs are low.

You have committed a significant amount of time to your garden and even made some large investments in equipment, but those investments haven't been in the most impactful areas. Therefore, your garden continues to underperform. Start with strategies #1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 13, 17, and 21 on the next page.



Your inputs are low but your outputs are also low.

You may be leaving a bit too much to chance and possibly lack the commitment to perform the necessary tasks at the right times. As a result, production suffers and you never get to experience the reward of growing a really productive garden. Start with strategies #2, 5, 11, 13 and 21 on the next page.



Your outputs are high and your inputs are low.

You are well on your way to mastering the most effective ways to use your time, money, and resources in their garden, enabling you to produce the most food with the fewest inputs. See strategies #7, 9, 14, 19, 20 and 21 on the next page.



Your outputs are high but your inputs are still high.

You are starting to see some positive returns from your inputs but you haven't yet realized which investments you can reduce or cut out entirely. You may be producing a lot but your operation is expensive and exhausting. See strategies #1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, and 21 on the next page.



Garden Improvement Strategies

Use your current position on the Performance Matrix to help you select the best action steps to take next in your vegetable garden. (See pages 22 and 23.)

My Selections

1. Invest in irrigation timers to automate the watering of your garden.
2. Select crops that require very little maintenance to better match your interest in providing minimal labour.
3. Spend money on tools and equipment that make your work faster or easier.
4. Learn how to build soil fertility with compost to avoid the use of more costly fertilizers.....
5. Be honest with yourself about your level of commitment to your garden during the planning phase and plan accordingly.
6. Work on performing tasks at the ideal time when they are easiest and incorporating more labour saving techniques.
7. Stretch the limits of your growing season with one or more season extension methods.
8. Install a drip irrigation system to use water more efficiently and reduce weed pressure.
9. Improve your record keeping so that you are better able to plan production to match your consumption.
10. Cover any areas of soil that are not covered with vegetables to conserve soil moisture and reduce weed pressure.
11. Reduce the size of garden and/or your crop selection temporarily until you have mastered more labour efficient techniques.

My Selections

12. Some tasks in the garden, like weeding and pruning, become much more difficult if left unfinished so prioritize these tasks above all others.
13. Review the five core variables that need to be controlled for optimal plant growth and improve your ability to control these variables.
14. Experiment with relay planting, succession planting, and companion planting to grow more food on less space and reduce your overall operating costs.
15. Start more of your seeds indoors to increase the quality of your seedlings, gain more control over your timing, and reduce spring planting costs.
16. Avoid starting your own seeds to minimize the amount of growing equipment needed and save time in spring.
17. Standardize your bed size and bed layout to make garden planning easier and allow for more efficient use of your garden space and equipment.
18. Slowly begin to invest in more more expensive equipment that will save you money in the long run. For example, a metal soil blocker and wooden trays will allow you to avoid the cost of purchasing and replacing plastic trays.
19. Reduce the cost of purchasing compost by devoting a large volume of space to the collection of free organic waste materials for composting.
20. Invest in infrastructure that helps to make your gardening work more pleasant and efficient such as storage spaces, washing stations, and seed starting areas.
21. Enroll in the Seed to Table course to refine your craft in a community of like-minded vegetable growers and follow a teacher with proven methods.

WHAT'S NEXT?

It's time to put these ideas into practice.

Are you ready to create the vegetable garden of your dreams? Whether you are starting from scratch on a new garden site or finally making an effort to refine your methods after a few years of trial and error, I have got just the thing to help you work toward vegetable mastery.

The Seed to Table course takes the guesswork out of gardening by guiding you through a process you can use to achieve consistent results in your garden, year after year. The lessons are packed with loads of science based solutions and demonstrations of proven techniques, while the LIVE sessions will give you all of the necessary support to put these ideas into practice. You'll have everything you need to transform that garden of yours into a dependable weed-free source of food for your family.



If there is one thing I'm sure about, it's that we need more competent home growers in this world, so when you are ready to take the next step, I will be ready to welcome you into our course community with open arms!

- Jared

Claim your one-time special offer and join this year's Seed to Table cohort!

www.vegetableacademy.com/specialoffer