

EXTENSION SERVICE
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Horticulture
Extension Circular No. 10.

THINNING

By
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The real purpose of thinning is to remove the surplus plants and to do it possible for those left to develop fine large uniform specimens. It is frequently as disastrous to neglect the thinning of the vegetables as it is to permit weeds to grow in the row and crowd the little plants.

Extra vegetable plants in the garden really become weeds by taking the moisture, plant food and sunlight that naturally belong to the vegetables.

There are a few vegetables that it ordinarily does not pay to thin, for example if you are growing carrots for stockfeed, do not thin because it does not matter how irregular carrots are in shape and size for stock; tonnage is what is desired. Carrots to be used for table use should be thinned to one plant to every four inches in non-irrigated sections, and to one every two inches in irrigated sections. Vegetables like carrots, table beets, turnips, salsify, parsnips must not be over grown if the best quality is desired. A small to medium sized root is more preferable than a large one. All plants producing roots like carrots, etc. should have sufficient room for good development but not enough to grow too large.

Onions should be thinned to four or five inches as size is an advantage in onions.

Lettuce should be given plenty of room for good development six to eight inches for leaf and twelve to fifteen inches for head varieties are safe distances.

Permit beets to grow thickly until the small beets begin to form and the tops have become from six to eight inches in height, and then use or market the small beets in bunches as greens. Beet greens are considered a delicate dish by many but are not common in the market.

Lettuce, spinach, mustard cress and similar plants can be thinned and the thinnings marketed to advantage.

If you wish nice, smooth, even-sized potatoes, and a large yield, thin your hills to one or two and never more than three stalks per hill.

Cantaloupes, squashes, pumpkins, watermelons and cucumbers should be thinned to four or five good strong plants per hill just as soon as all danger from bugs, frost or wind is passed.

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Thinning is usually done by carefully pulling the extra plants from the hill or row, however, if the soil is dry there is danger of injuring the roots of the other plants, cut just below the surface of the ground.

Corn in the small garden patch should always be thinned and suckered. It will pay to thin to two strong plants per hill if in hills or one plant in case of drilled corn.

Sometimes it is advisable to replant where the seed has not come up well, however, it is usually necessary to thoroughly work up the soil and prepare as for the first planting.