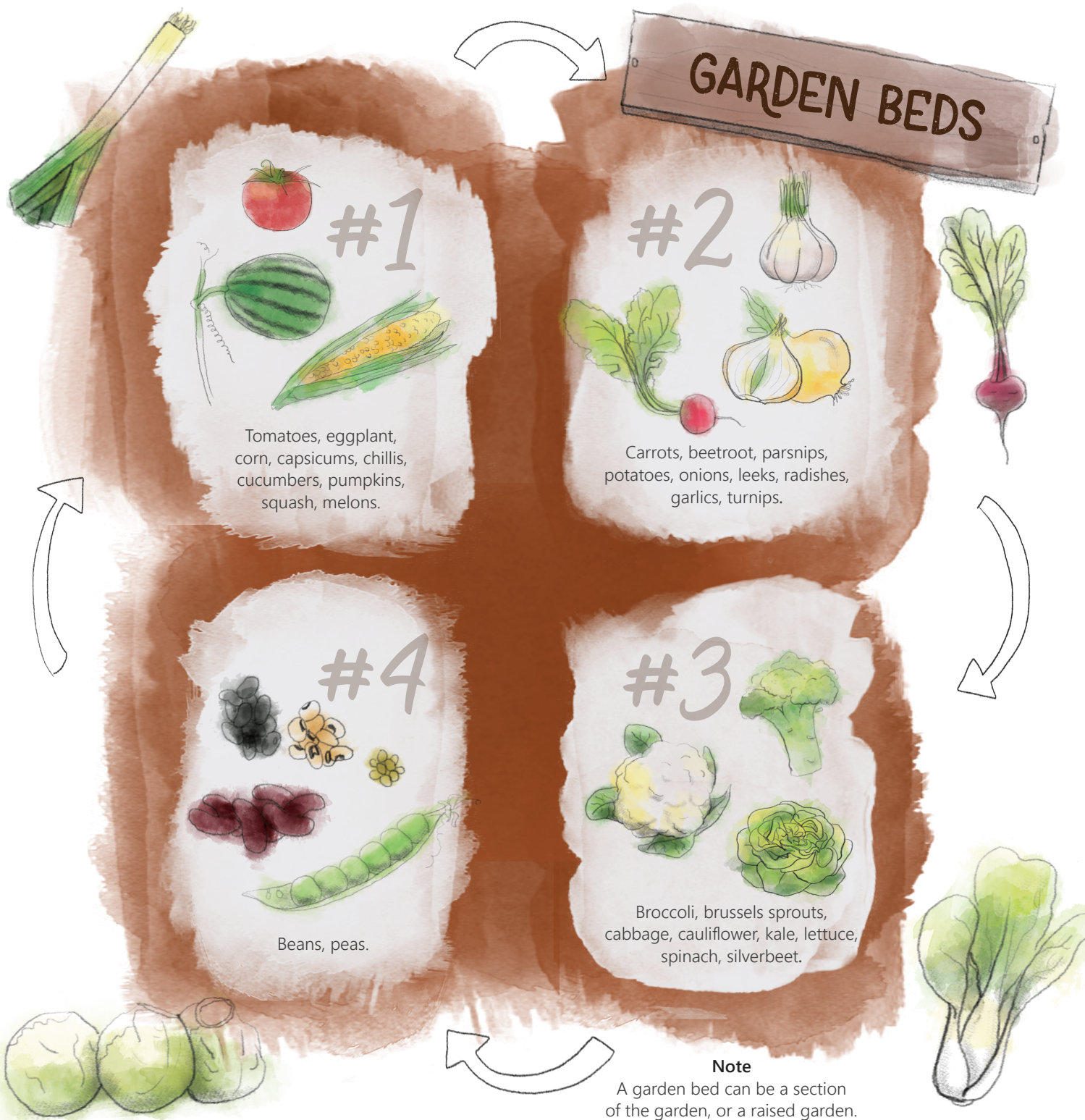




Planting groups of plants in different locations each year and co-ordinating crops to match soil conditions is called 'crop rotation'. We are often asked why crop rotation is important, and the simple answer is that rotating crops prevents the buildup of pest and diseases in the soil by disrupting their life cycle and naturally reduces the chance of the soil retaining any nasties from the previous season. Many garden pests can build up immunity to some types of insecticides, and crop rotation is a simple, chemical-free way to stop the buildup of pests and diseases. Another bonus is a crop in a rotation can produce up to 25% more than a crop planted in the same spot year after year. This is because all plants take up different nutrients from the soil.





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Crop Rotation



Tips To Remember

If you don't have the space to rotate your entire veggie patch there are certain crops that are a must. These are tomatoes, potatoes and brassicas (cabbage, cauli and broccoli). This makes it harder for soil-borne diseases and pests to attack them.

Traditionally there is a four-bed crop rotation. Each of the four sections (beds) of the garden grow the same crop only every fourth year. In year one, crop #1 is planted in the first bed, crop #2 in the second bed and so on. The next year each crop is moved to the next bed: #1 is moved to the second bed in year two, then to the third and fourth beds in the third and fourth years. So this rotation works over a four-year period. Herbs and long-term crops such as asparagus, rhubarb, berries and citrus and other fruit trees are not included in this rotation.

#1 Tomatoes and Heat Lovers – This is a group of heavy feeders and should be followed by #4, the Legume Family, to help replace the nutrients in the soil naturally.

#2 Root Crops – These need a root-based fertiliser with plenty of phosphorus. Avoid high-nitrogen fertilisers.

#3 Leafy and Green – Brassicas are heavy feeders and can be prone to clubroot. Incorporate plenty of lime for brassicas and nitrogen for other leafy greens.

#4 Legumes – (Bean and Pea Family) Legumes catch nitrogen from the air and put it into the soil.