

Bluestem Breezes  
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## **Garden Planting Tips**

Anal tendencies seem to occur at our place semi-regularly. This lifestyle seems so ‘normal’ to me, but I have been told otherwise. It is interesting to me which things each of us make a priority and which things seem un-important in the whole scheme of life.

For instance, I was - let’s say - ‘encouraged’ by Person B to work on straighter rows in my garden. I don’t know why a little hiccup in the veggie line-up effected the way they tasted in past years. But, I digress. Let’s turn this in to an education opportunity!

I read a recent article from K-State Specialist Ward Upham about using a string line and planting board for more accurately spaced garden rows. Talk about good timing!

“Two simple tools can make planting a vegetable garden easier. A string line is used to insure straight rows and a planting board can make spacing vegetables within a row easier.

Most gardeners make their own string line. A very simple one can be made with a tent peg, a 12" piece of 1 x 2 lumber and some string. String is wound on the 1 x 2. Either notch each end of the board or drive a nail near each end to hold the string as it is wound. The end of the string is tied to the nail driven into the board. The other end of the string is tied to the tent peg.

When marking out a row, drive the tent peg into the ground where you want the row to start. Mark the end of the row with a second tent peg and unwind enough string to stretch between them. Actually you will want the string line offset where the plants will go by a couple of inches so that it isn’t in your way. In other words, you will make your row next to the string, not under it. You now have the means of making a straight row.

So what is a planting board? A planting board is a 1 x 4 board that is four feet long. Relatively deep notches are cut every foot with shallow notches at 6 inches from each deep notch. Some gardeners also bevel the side opposite the notches so they can work the beveled end into the soil to make a shallow trench for seed.

When planting, lay the planting board near your tent peg and align it with the string. It is now easy to place plants or seeds at the recommended spacing. Move the planting board with you as you progress down the row.”

I would like to mention that our place was scarce the day I chose the plant the garden this spring. I was unable to locate the string line in the shop, but I did locate a huge tape measure. I want you to keep that in mind as you consider the information above. Even if you don’t have the specific tools/resources they list, consider what you may have lying around that could serve the same purpose (broom, shovel, wire, twine, etc.).

For additional gardening information, visit the Extension Office (215 Kansas, Courthouse, Alma; [kamayer@ksu.edu](mailto:kamayer@ksu.edu); 765-3821). For Bluestem Breezes archives, check out [wabaunsee.ksu.edu](http://wabaunsee.ksu.edu).