

Plant only the vegetables you like to eat — and don't forget about bordering the beds with ornamentals like marigold, alyssum, pansy or viola.



BY

Veggies For All Seasons

Doug and Rita Karydas have been gardening less than two years on their lot in the southeast part of Houston. But already they have a vegetable garden that keeps them in fresh produce year-round. Last winter's kale continued to thrive into May, despite the high temperatures of late spring. And their peppers continued to produce right through the winter, despite admonitions that peppers are tender and need protection from the frost.

The Karydases credit their success with vegeta-

bles to chiefly organic methods that preclude using any chemical pesticides. They pay close attention to the soil and what goes into it. When they first dug up the garden area and found masses of gumbo, they incorporated gypsum to loosen the clods. Then they added a pickup truckload of worm castings — they got a good deal from an Austin company when it folded — and 15,000 earthworms. Periodically they add compost made from kitchen vegetable waste and rotted leaves — bags of which are provided by the neighbors.

Besides the kale and peppers, they grow beets, corn, three varieties of leaf lettuce, Swiss chard, carrots, cucumbers, broccoli, potatoes, tomatoes (they like the Roma VF for making their own tomato paste) and soybeans which they'll harvest (they're vegetarians) and use as a versatile protein.

The Karydases' method of strawberry-growing is exemplary (fall is a good time to plant strawberries for next spring). They place the strawberry plants in a rich, well-drained bed and mulch heavily with compost. They find that their No. 1 opponent in the straw-

Doug and Rita Karydas favor organic methods of growing vegetables in their backyard garden — no pesticides and lots of composted organic matter.

berry patch is the slug or snail. To foil him, they lay sheets of newspapers under the ripening fruit. The newspapers (or sheets of black plastic) under the plants prevent the snails from reaching the ripening berries, but the fruit must be harvested daily, as it ripens, before the snails discover how to surmount the newspapers. For a lengthy harvest they grow two varieties, Sequoia (early-bearing) and Everbearing (for a later crop).