



CHRIS PINCHBECK

real popular again. Let's see — perennial sedums, marrow, peonies, phlox, bee balm, sundrops, gladioli. Real estate is tight in the back yard. If you can't perform as a cut flower, then you're out!

That said, I also grow flowers that help protect the vegetables from pests. I put marigolds around the tomatoes — haven't had hornworm problems since I did that. And we grow a lot of morning glories on the trellises; those are just for us.

**Why grow in boxes?**

Raised boxes give me an early start, because the soil in a box is drier and ready to be worked earlier. Also, if we have a wet, cold month in the summer, like we had in 2007, you can still garden in a raised bed, because the water runs out and the plants don't rot.

As far as size, my boxes are four feet long and two feet wide so that I can reach in and weed without overreaching. You can make them any size, but the board should be at least a one-by-eight so that they're deep enough. You basically build a sandbox and make a garden out of that. [Free-form raised beds without a box also work, although they need to be recreated each season.]

**What do you grow?**

Early in the season, around the end of April in southern Maine, I put in my seeds. Leaf lettuce, radishes, onion sets, spinach, swiss chard, beet greens, peas, and carrots. Beet greens are new to me, and some of the family weren't crazy about them, but I know a couple of elderly people who can't grow gardens any more and love them.

*Raised boxes give me an early start, because the dry soil in a box is ready to be worked earlier.*

**So they get the greens, and you get the beets?**

Actually, I have someone else who likes the beets. I tried the beets, and I wasn't crazy about them. But it is something you can grow early. And it's nice to be able to get your hands dirty after a long winter.

**Makes sense to me. Then again, I'm a gardener, too. So, what do you have planted for**