

Palia Gardening Considerations: When You Don't Have A Ton of Time to Play

Context: this was originally written as a direct response to u/hannahhumphrey (Sausagegirl)'s post, "[How Not to Be Overwhelmed by Gardening](#)," and is tailored to those specific requirements. It, um... didn't fit in the comment box, though. So here it is, though I've obviously tweaked and formatted it a bit more. Hopefully it will prove helpful!

I know you said you were already feeling overwhelmed, and I tend to be, uh. Very wordy. This ended up just *unconscionably* long, but I'll try to break it up so it will be digestible. Unfortunately, I'm already a little spacey today, so apologies if I don't succeed.

I'm throwing a lot at you, here, so take it at your own pace, and if anything doesn't apply to you or even just sounds like a drag to think about, please feel free to disregard it!

It sounds like the things you need to do are:

- make money (to buy tool upgrades etc.)
- grow crops for focus food cooking and other misc. cooking
- grow cotton for fabric
- create regular worms and glow worms (and perhaps fertilizer) and/or make use of your worm and glow worm farm(s)

Crafters print money while you sleep: aim for 100% uptime

My first piece of advice for anyone looking to make more money, especially anybody with relatively limited active playtime, is to invest in crafting licenses, use them to place crafters, and then keep them busy as close to 100% of the time as you can. Generally,* crafters produce a *minimum* of 15g per hour of value added over the ingredients you put in, so they basically print gold while you are away. (Most are quite a bit higher than that.)

**exceptions I am aware of include sapwood in a sawmill, cotton in a loom, starred pickled peppers in a glow worm farm, and grilled fish of [certain sell values](#) in a glow worm farm; there may be others.*

Then, the question becomes: which crafters, and what do you put in them?

To answer that, we'll need to first figure out what you're growing, and why. Let's start with the things you need, and then fit the money-making scheme around that.

Feeding yourself (focus food): consider minimizing gardened ingredients

➤ *Note: With the 0.180 increases in most item values *other* than gardening and vendor-only items, frequently-used forageable ingredients like spice sprouts, garlic, and sweet leaf now are worth as much as an unstarred carrot or tomato. The values of meats and crab have also increased, and even the cheapest fish is worth 30g unstarred. This somewhat lessens the impact of reducing the amount of produce used, though it's still important to take opportunity costs into account.*

On the one hand, keeping your focus up lets you level up faster, and that unlocks upgrades and other things faster. (The faster you get to level 25 gardening, for example, the faster you will be able to get 100% star crops from star seeds alone.) On the other hand, eating costs money.

Since the garden is a very potent source of passive income, and obviously anything you eat does not turn into money, my usual approach to focus food has actually been to **minimize the amount of produce I am eating** regularly (making room for more produce I am making money from).

There are a few ways to do this, and you can do all of them:

1. Cook with others (split the ingredients) — BUT you've mentioned you prefer to play solo, so let's set that aside
2. Choose recipes that either don't require any/many gardening ingredients, or don't require high-value/high-cost ones like apples
3. Choose recipes that give you a higher proportion of focus compared to the value of the ingredients if you had used them for something else (opportunity cost)
4. Choose recipes that use crops you want the buff from/that you would be growing anyway, but that aren't your primary cash crops

I made [a whole spreadsheet](#) dedicated to helping me figure out what to eat, especially #3.

For me personally, the intersection of all of the above cost-reducing factors was [Steak Dinner](#). By way of example, this recipe...

- only requires one garden ingredient (wheat), leaving most of my garden slots free for cash crops or special projects
- the other 3 ingredients are vendor-available if needed/otherwise easily obtained
- easily cooked solo ([steps](#)) and can also easily be split with others, if you want
- good ratio of focus to opportunity cost
- wheat puts harvest boost on its neighbors, and that +50% yield boosts revenue 👍 (There are also many dishes that use rice or corn, which also give the harvest boost buff.)
- is something I am happy to cook and eat on a regular basis

If you are brand new to the game or still working on [raising your max focus](#), then [Palian Onion Soup](#) (from a [found item quest](#)) is very reasonable in terms of ingredients opportunity costs. (If you are reading this and don't have glow worm farms yet, then Hearty Vegetable Soup made with tomatoes or carrots may be a slightly better choice, but does require double foraging.)

- *Note: Your considerations may vary.* There are some foods (e.g., meaty stir fry) that might be even better for *me* to make, given my playstyle, but I just don't... want to eat them? So I don't. So, please tailor this to your own wants and needs. These are ideas to consider, not rules.

Whatever you choose to eat, make it something you are comfortable producing in enough quantity to let you do what you want to do. (I usually cook the steak dinner recipe 30 times in a row once or twice a week, and that keeps me full on focus for all my other activities — but I log a LOT of playtime. For you, this will probably be less.)

As a note: some folks do just eat preserves — pickled potatoes, apple jam, blueberry jam. I personally feel like this is the opposite of all of the above principles and a waste of gold, if you are struggling to make money (see spreadsheet above for the numbers), **BUT!!** It also saves you playtime spent cooking, and leverages the afk/idle time that you have in abundance instead. If you find cooking unpleasant, or too onerous when undertaken solo, then eating preserves may be a reasonable option. You can level your cooking skill just as well by grilling fish to sell (good money!) or other methods, rather than making food intended for eating.

Miscellaneous cooking ingredients: Just in Case

You will probably eventually want to stock up on all of the different crops. You might not want to *continually* grow them for money-making, but it won't hurt to sock some (a stack each?) away for Just in Case, especially now, when you are likely to get a mix of starred and unstarred versions.

For most of the crops, this is easy and flexible: they can be "hot swapped" in any given layout with crops that give the same buff. For example:

- corn, rice, and wheat (single-tile harvest boosters)
- tomatoes, potatoes, and napa cabbage (waterers)
- carrots, onions, and bok choy (weeders)

When you are building up your stores for future cooking, just sub these in temporarily for your preferred crops — on a weekend, maybe.

The exceptions to this hot-swappability are **cotton (partially), spicy peppers, blueberries, and apples**.

Peppers, blueberries, and apples all take up more than one tile and don't swap in easily. (Arguably, apples are the easiest, since they just take up a whole soil plot.) I don't think you will have unlocked most of these yet, so you don't need to worry about them until you have; if there are specific ones you *have* unlocked and want to start growing now, we can discuss that. I'll also include one possible layout for the future at the end.

(I personally put off growing all three of them until fairly late, because it just took me a while to get comfortable with larger plot layouts. I stuck with a 3x9 tile plot for a loooong time, and I still don't put all of my soil into the usual 9x9 giant square.)

Cotton only needs one tile, though, and it DOES give a very valuable QualityUp buff to its neighbors. For making money, QualityUp (from cotton or fertilizer) plus planting starred seeds whenever you can basically adds about as much value as HarvestBoost does, before level 15 or so (though if you can double up, even better). By level 25, your base chance for starred crops is high enough that you will no longer need an additional quality boost buff to guarantee starred crops when you plant starred seeds. Any starred cotton you get is also good money when processed into seeds, while unstarred can be processed into fabric and stockpiled (though unfortunately at an unavoidable loss, as it now takes 2 cotton per fabric).

It is also definitely a good idea to be growing cotton *now*, when you are still getting some unstarred crops. Later on (level 35 or 40 or so), you will start getting *only* starred crops no matter what seed you plant, which is cool, but also makes me cry a little on the inside when I have to turn starred cotton into fabric. So, definitely prioritize that up front, like you're doing!

I personally like to plant cotton beside harvest boost crops so it produces more cotton per plant, so I can plant less. (And since I WANT unstarred cotton, it's not necessary to put QualityUp fertilizer on it or anything.) You can also put HarvestBoost fertilizer on it, if you are producing the fertilizer anyway.

This is the very simple layout I used while I was growing cotton: [3x9 potato tomato cotton rice wheat](#)

(At that time, bok choy was not in the game yet, and I was also trying to get the Weed Whacker accomplishment out of the way while I was growing simpler things, so I neglected the weeders.)

I don't necessarily recommend this layout now, though; bok choy is too good to leave on the table, imo. I'll include another layout below that will do both.

Gardening money math: What to Plant?

It sounds like you're getting a maximum of 1-2 growth ticks on your garden each weekday, and 2-4 on each weekend day; so, 9 to 18 per real-life week. On the other hand, you have plenty of time between play sessions to let your crafters run, as long as they don't stall or run out of material.

So, in my opinion, to produce gold steadily and keep your crafters busy, you may want **crops that produce quickly but also add a lot of value when processed**, since your garden yield per amount of real-life time is

on the low end, but your idle time is abundant. Processing speed will matter less since you have a minimum of 24 real-life hours between harvests most of the time.

The quickest-producing crops are

- tomatoes* (4/2/2/2 day grow -> preserves, 27m; 13h per hopper)
- bok choy (3 day grow -> seeds, 1h 12m; 19.2h per hopper**)
- rice (3 day grow -> seeds, 42m; 11h per hopper**)
- carrots (3 day grow -> preserves, 27m; 13h per hopper)

*Tomatoes have an initial 4-day grow time to first harvest, but then produce a harvest every other day for six days; ten days total.

**Seed collectors will only process 16 crop units before the machine stalls due to the bin being "full" at 2 stacks plus one, since sometimes it will give you a bonus starred/unstarred seed.)

And fortunately, three of those quick-growing crops produce a lot of money! **Bok choy, rice, and tomatoes** are all in the top 4 of [gold per tile per Palia day](#), once processed, and the bok choy in particular takes full advantage of your idle time.

Other crops

Choose the other crops in your layout based on your ancillary goals — i.e., what you are doing for focus food, etc.

Weeders: Carrots are not great for money, despite the fast grow time; but the other weeder besides bok choy is onions, which are not much better. However, onions are used in more recipes, and pickled onions do better in a worm farm than pickled carrots. They also will result in less idle crafter time than carrots.

- Onions (4 day grow -> preserves, 36m; 18h per hopper)

Harvest boosters: Other than rice, you have wheat or corn. Corn harvests less often (5 days); it can be preserved or seeded, and is used in a few key foods for quests. Wheat harvests more often (4 days), and is used in more cooking recipes. They are about even when it comes to money.

- Wheat (4 day grow -> seeds, 42m; 11h per hopper)
- Corn (5 day grow -> preserves, 48m; 24h per hopper OR seeds, 48m; 12.8h per hopper) <- recommend preserves

You may not need a second harvest booster, though, since cotton can be used in its place in most layouts:

- Cotton (5 day grow, starred crops into seeds, 36m; 9.6h per hopper)

Waterers: I recommend potatoes, as they are better money per tile per day than napa cabbage and also grow faster. (Napa takes 6 days to grow.)

- Potatoes (5-day grow -> seeds, 1h 24m; 22.4h per hopper; or preserves, 54m, 27h per hopper)

(You'll probably end up planting your tomatoes, potatoes, corn (if using), and cotton on the weekend and then processing them through the week, maybe with a second replant in the middle?)

Using your idle time: Worm Farms...

One way to extend the value extracted from each crop is to shove the preserves in a worm farm, IF you happen to have a crafter slot unoccupied for some reason. (If you've processed all your crops, maybe.)

Pickled onions and bok choy kimchi add +23g per hour over the base product, which is unfortunately far below average — but it's better than zero gold added, if you don't have something filling a crafter slot, AND it will give you HarvestBoost fertilizer in the bargain.

If you need QualityUp fertilizer and don't have access to fruit/desserts yet, you can put sweet leaf in a worm farm or a glow worm farm. (Glow worm farm is better if you just want profit.) Cake parties are an even better use for sweet leaf, and a few of the resulting cakes can then be used to produce the fertilizer, but those are really only efficient in large groups (7+ players).

...and Glow Worm Farms

Preserves put in glow worm farms don't gain much in value (~10-15g/hr), but if you need large amounts of HarvestBoost fertilizer and also want 2 glow worms per hour per farm, pickled corn is convenient and reasonably efficient. You probably will not need to produce HB fertilizer quickly since you are not logging that many growth ticks per week.

However, for me, the best use for glow worm farms is eating any random low-value things you end up with excess of: morels, green onion, sernuk or muujin meat, oyster meat, and so on. These produce 40-45g worth of glow worm and HarvestBoost, yielding up to +29g per crafter slot hour. A full hopper will run for 30 hours without needing attention.

Therefore:

If you have unoccupied crafter slots or ones left idle during the week, I recommend putting down glow worm farms. Not to replace the preserves jars and seeders, but to fill in the gaps, like when you're waiting for your tomatoes to finish growing and have a couple preserve jars sitting empty. Pick 'em up and slap glow worm farms down instead!

(They do take advanced materials to craft, but in my opinion they're worth more money-making capacity than the exquisite tools are, especially since you have limited active playtime.)

Note: most of the materials-crafting recipes (iron, heartwood, silk, etc.) produce more value added per hour than stuff in a glow worm farm, BUT they don't run as long unattended. I suggest running your materials crafters while you are playing and can sort them out regularly, then swapping to something long-running when it's time to log out.

And finally...

Layouts: What to Plant Where?

Things to consider:

- **Prioritize self-watering layouts.** I recommend setting up your garden so it will water itself. Only having to weed the garden makes for much less time spent fussing with it and more time to do other stuff in your limited playtime. This means planting a lot of tomatoes and potatoes, but they're both good money, so imo this is fine.
- **To weed or not to weed? i.e, double bok choy, or nah?**
 - On the one hand, there's an accomplishment series for plucking weeds.
 - On the other hand, weeds impede growth and that means you need to check the garden every hour when you are online to make the most of your available growth ticks.
 - On the *other* other hand, bok choy is worth a fair bit more than onions or carrots. (And self-weeding layout can be converted to a not-self-weeding layout by putting bok choy where onions or carrots would go.)

- On the apparent fourth hand, boy choy requires increasing numbers of seeders to keep up with it after a point.

Conclusion: your playstyle and preferences will need to guide your answers, here.

Example Layouts

These examples are intended as possible compromises between being comprehensible at a glance once you know the pattern and actually taking good advantage of companion planting/crop optimization/diversity. They are heavily biased toward my own preferences.

Option #1, Simple Mode: [The Starter](#) (AFK, Modular, Tileable)

100% self-weeding and self-watering (AFK layout); partially harvest-boosted.



- simple layout that still uses companion planting
- works for any number of soil plots from 1 to 9: you can basically plant this layout in each one, and they will all work independently, whether you squish them together in a big square or lay them all out separately
 - this also means that partially changing the layout doesn't require rejuggling the whole thing, since it's modular
- can substitute cotton for the harvest boost crops on some or all of the plots
- I put onions for cooking reasons, but you can use carrots if you want to
- accommodates most cooking items other than fruit and peppers (but see #3 for a variation)
- can stack HarvestBoost fertilizer on the corner and center tiles, if you are producing it
 - just don't put 99 fertilizer on ALL 9 tiles of a soil plot or it will bug out and become invisible/unusable
- when you get more soil plots, if you plant this layout and put them next to each other, they will tile usefully! The corner harvest boost buff will apply to the crop's neighbors.

Option #2, Intermediate Mode: [The Bullseye](#) (AFK)

100% self-weeding, self-watering, AND harvest-boosted (requires only 4 harvest boost fertilizer per growth tick) - credit to @mentor_kurt on the Palia Discord for [sharing this pattern](#) (Discord message link).

The Bullseye

Crops



Fertilisers per Day



Layout concept by Khan the Windseeker (@mentor_kurt) on the official Palia Discord



- more complex layout (3 concentric circles of repeating patterns, and then some horizontal lines in the very center) but still uses basic hot-swappable crops
- requires 9 plots in a big square (can't be done with fewer)
- can use any combination of 2-3 harvest boost crops and cotton for the center ring as long as the harvest boost crops each have a "companion" (different harvest boost crop) as a neighbor
- (if putting in cotton, I recommend replacing every third harvest boost crop in the ring, [like this](#))
- Harvest boost from companion planting lets you use QualityUp fertilizer to ensure 100% starred crops (with starred seeds)
- can also drop an apple tree smack in the middle without making any other changes, and just harvest boost it with fertilizer.

...now that I look at it again, you can probably swap onion and bok choy in this layout to maximize your bok choy count, but I don't feel like redoing the graphic. Sorry. 😊 (Updated the link, though.)

Option #3, Advanced Mode: [Four Apples, AFK Style](#)

100% self-weeding, self watering, and mostly harvest-boosted (including the apples). 9 harvest boost fertilizer brings it up to 100%.

Four Apples, AFK Style

Uses two 3x3 patterns to surround the apples: Red Block and Blue Block. To avoid confusion, plant blocks separately, then combine. (Fertilizer optional; apples get all buffs regardless.)

Crops



Fertilisers per Day



Layout by Ren (IGN: Eliot Reinald) aka u/Nebet

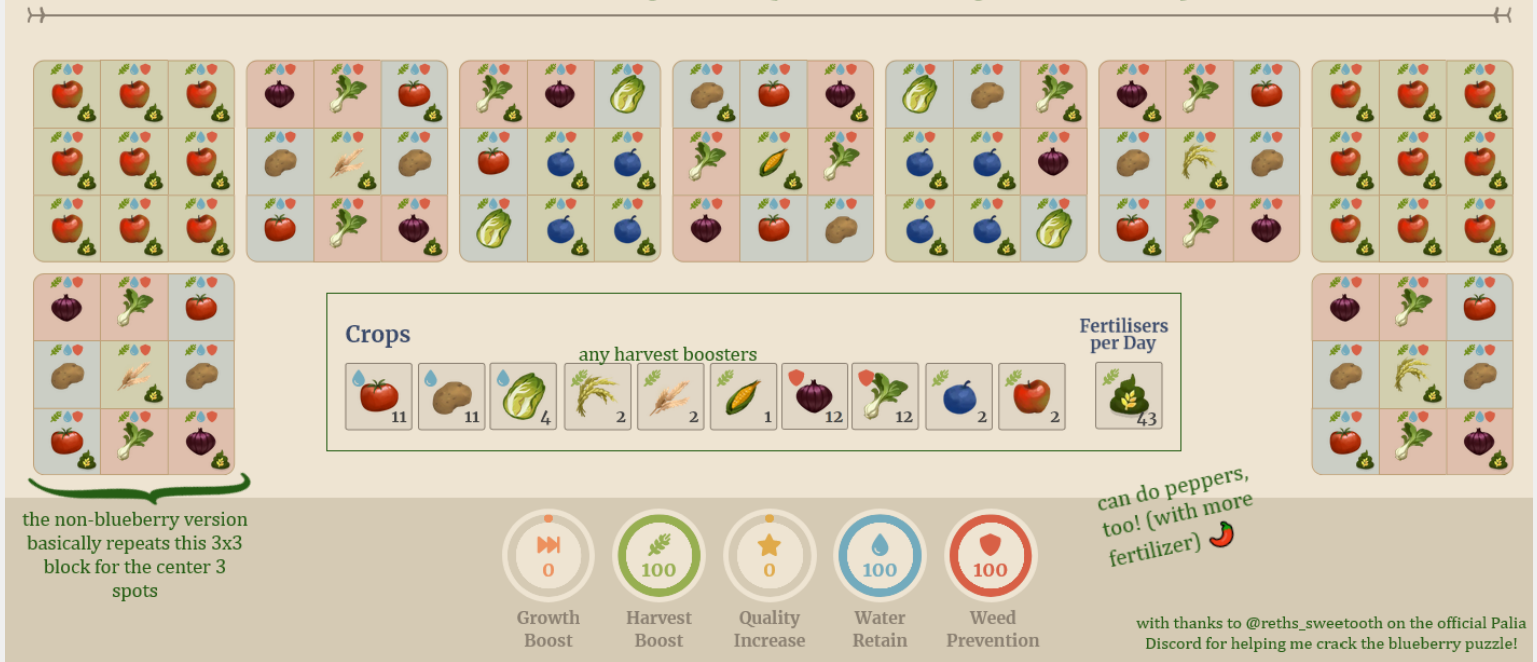


- uses two modified versions of the Starter layout above to triple-buff apple trees
- smaller segments of the layout can be used independently, but each apple tree will need to be touching 3 other plots to get all 3 buffs
- useful before you reach level 25 gardening as it permits the use of QualityUp fertilizer to ensure 100% starred crops

Option Z, Weird Mode: [Apples and Berries and \(optionally\) Peppers, Oh My](#)

100% self-watering and self-weeding, partially harvest-boosted (rest filled in with fertilizer)

Ren's Weird Layout (Blueberry Version)



- tailored VERY tightly to my own idiosyncrasies — **this is not a recommendation**, but rather mostly just included to demonstrate some of the Garden Planner's capabilities
- more complex layout, incorporating fruit (and optionally peppers, with additional fertilizer) without it being a huge square
 - note: if you ARE comfortable with it, the 9x9 Garden Cube is technically the most efficient layout as it minimizes outside corners, which can only have a maximum of 2 buffs from companion planting
- uses an unfortunate amount of HB fertilizer :(
- "advanced but easy" because it's recommended for *after* you are mostly getting star produce from planting star seeds

I actually am currently using [something in between](#) (2 apple trees flanked by independent layouts) and it's making me pretty good money, I think, while still being easy to remember. However, as mentioned previously, I log a lot of playtime, so my apples grow fast. **While you are still in the cash-strapped early game phase, I do not recommend apples, blueberries, or peppers** (especially if you mostly play solo).

They are by NO means the only layouts you can use; there are dozens of good ones out there, including ones that already include all of the different crops all at once, like [this one](#) shared by [u/SpicyJellyfish](#), and super clever fruit-focused ones like [this one](#) shared by [u/UnabashedVoice](#). I personally find these types of layouts overwhelming, because I find it difficult to remember the whole pattern — and as a result I can't just look at my garden and know it's correct, which leads to a lot of re-checking. This may not be a problem for you, though!

Outro

...well. That sure is a lot, ain't it. Pardon my slightly loopy infodumping....

In any case, I hope any small part of it is useful in helping you to organize your thoughts as you think through your approach.

Please don't hesitate to point out anything that is unclear or that you'd like me to summarize — or, if this is piquing your interest and you'd like to hyperfixate together (lol), do feel free to reach out to chat!

References and General Resources

Official Fan-run Palia Wiki - https://palia.wiki.gg/wiki/Palia_Wiki

- [Seed Collector](#) page and [Preserves Jar](#) page provided the processing times referenced above

Palia Garden Planner - <https://palia-garden-planner.vercel.app>

- provides rough estimates of revenue per Palia day for different layouts and visualizes how companion planting buffs layer together

Gold Profit tool on PaliaTracker.com - <https://www.paliatracker.com/gold-profit>

- useful for comparing per-crop outputs for different crafters (doesn't take processing time into account) including putting preserves (and other things) into worm/glow worm farms

What Should I Eat? -  Palia: Various Number Crunchings by Ren

- compares and ranks focus foods based on the ratio between amount of focus given and opportunity cost of the ingredients ("what if you turned that apple into jam instead?"), among other considerations. Also lists ingredients and recipe sources.
- there are a few other reference sheets I've put together in the other tabs, too

Which Crops for Maximum Profit? by u/HollowofHaze -

https://www.reddit.com/r/Palia/comments/1avq7jo/which_crops_should_i_plant_for_maximum_profit/

- ranks crops by revenue per tile per day, which is useful IF you have minimal growth ticks to make use of AND maximal idle time for crafters to work. (Less applicable if you log a lot of playtime.)

Seeds or Preserves? by u/HollowofHaze -

https://www.reddit.com/r/Palia/comments/1akh2ll/updated_should_i_make_this_crop_into_seeds_or/

- breaks down value added per crop and per minute of processing
- does not take into account worm farms as an option for processing raw crops; see the PaliaTracker Gold Profit Tool for those comparisons (worm and glow worm farms take 60m to process each unit of input regardless of what it is)