



BED PLANNING TOOL

CREATED BY INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE – CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA

Summary

This Bed Planning tool is used to assist farmers in knowing which crops to plant in each bed and when to plant them. Each bed marker is filled out either by staff ahead of time, or by farmers in a class session using their crop calendars and crop rotation plot maps. The bed markers are then placed in each bed at the farm. This tool was developed to increase farmer independence through simple tools, as farmers were not consulting their notebooks weekly and/or had difficulty reading their crop calendars throughout the season. You can add cover crop rotations, succession planting, and multi-season planting. Using these tools allows farmers to quickly look at the upcoming dates, prepare their beds, and plant their seeds in the right bed and at the right time. They are laminated and tape is used for writing in permanent marker (on top of tape), so that they can be recycled and used year after year.

Who made this guide?

This teaching resource was developed by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Charlottesville VA, and enhanced in collaboration with the Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED). From 2015-2017, ISED partnered with refugee farmer training programs throughout the country to support the design of new and shareable teaching resources for culturally and linguistically diverse farmers. To access the whole list of newly developed teaching resources for refugee farmer training program, follow this link to New Entry's ['New American Resource Library'](#). For more in-depth explanations of the teaching approaches and activities used in these materials, you can refer to this [Refugee Farmer Teaching Handbook](#).



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Audience (TA or Tot)	TA (Technical Assistance for farmers)
Language and Literacy Level	Basic literacy and numeracy for dates. Can use either written words or vegetable photos for crops.
Farmer Experience	1st year +
Pre-Requisites	Reading a basic table
Region or Climate	Any
Program Structure	Any
Season	Any
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing/laminating—dependent on number of farmers/beds • Teaching the tool—20 minutes • Filling out tool with farmers—30 minutes
Staff and Interpreters	One staff person, interpreters for LEP
Additional Supplies Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laminator • Landscape staples • Tape
Background Material	Need to have a farm planting calendar and farm map of all plots/beds

TEACHING MATERIALS INCLUDED

1. Bed markers
2. Planting calendar
3. Crop rotation plot map (“Charlottesville Enhancement Bed Sign Tool.xlsx”)

BED #			BED #		
SPRING 	Crop	Planting Date	SPRING 	Crop	Planting Date
SUMMER 	Crop	Planting Date	SUMMER 	Crop	Planting Date
FALL 	Crop	Planting Date	FALL 	Crop	Planting Date

CORE SKILLS IN THIS LESSON

- Crop mapping
- Succession planning
- Reading and writing dates

- Vegetable seasonality identification
- Following a crop plan
- Crop rotation planning
- Cover crop use

SUGGESTED TEACHING METHODS

The use of this tool is taught in 20 minutes, explaining each section/part of the table and how you read it. We have a discussion about how you use it, and why we created it.

Grids

- The entire tool is a basic grid. We explain what each part of the grid is and how to read it.

Information gap

- After understanding how to read it, we do a test of a few different, already filled out tools. We ask farmers questions based on the marker, and have them find the answer in the sign:
 - Q: What crop will you plant in this bed? Which bed number?
 - A: I am planting mustard in bed number 2
 - Q: When will you plant this crop?
 - A: On April 2nd and April 4th
 - Q: What does this sign tell us?
 - A: I will be planting tomatoes, in bed 6, on May 4th.(This part of the activity could be done as one group or in pairs.)

Hands on demonstration

- Shows farmers how to fill out one bed tool. Then, they fill out the others.

Peer teaching

- If there are second-year farmers in the class, you can use peer teaching to have them teach new farmers how to use the tool.

Reflection questions

- You can use this to ask farmers how they might use this tool/how they think it would be helpful.

TEACHING TIPS AND VARIATIONS

- Limitations—only works for one/two crops per bed per season. If a farmer has a 100' bed and plants 25' in one crop and the next 25' in another crop at the same time, they would need a bed marker for each crop.

Variations:

- Advanced farmers can practice filling out their own tools using their calendars and maps. For beginning/low literacy farmers, staff can fill them out and farmers can be taught how to read/use them.

Teaching tips:

- Accompanying tools are:
 - Planting Calendar Pieces
 - Monthly Planting Poster
 - Crop Spacing Reference Tool
- Related Lessons: Crop location is predetermined by farmers using the “Crop rotation lesson plan” in order to make sure crops are rotated across the farm. Crop planting dates are determined by staff and taught in “Creating a planting calendar lesson plan.”