



Community Gardens Planning and Information Guide

VEGETABLE PLANTING SCHEDULE - Thanks to Dill's Greenhouse

Crop	Days to Maturity	Spring Planting Dates	Fall Planting Dates	Seed/Plants 100 ft.	Distance Between Rows	Distance Between Plants	Depth of Plant
Asparagus	2 nd season	Apr 5 – 25		50 roots	3 – 5 ft.	1½ – 2 ft.	6 in.
Bean, bush	50-60	Apr 25 – May 30	Jul 25 – Aug 5	½ lb.	3 ft.	2 – 4 in.	1 – 1½ in.
Bean, pole	65-75	May 10 – 20		½ lb.	3 ft.	6 – 12 in.	1 – 1½ in.
Bean, lima	65-75	May 10 – 25		1 lb.	2 – 2½ ft.	3 – 4 in.	1 – 1½ in.
Beet	55-65	Apr 1 – 15	Aug 1 – Sep 25	1 oz.	2 – 2½ ft.	2 in.	1 in.
Broccoli	60-80	Mar 25 – Apr 5	Sep 25 – 30	100 plants	2½ ft.	14 – 18 in.	
Cabbage	65-80	Apr 1 – 20	Sep 20 – 30	100 plants	2½ ft.	12 in.	
Cantaloupe	80-90	May 10 – 20		1 oz.	4 – 6 ft.	3½ – 4 ft.	1½ in.
Carrot	70-80	Mar 25 – Apr 10	Sep 20 – 30	½ oz.	2 ft.	2 – 3 in.	½ in.
Cauliflower	55-60	Apr 1 – 20	Sep 20 – 30	100 plants	3 ft.	12 – 18 in.	
Collard	55-70	Mar 20 – Apr 10		½ oz.	2½ ft.	8 – 16 in.	½ in.
Corn	80-100	May 1 – Jul 20		¼ lb.	3 – 3½ ft.	12 – 18 in.	2 in.
Cucumber	60-65	May 10 – 30		1 oz.	3.5 – 5 ft.	3 – 4 ft.	1½ in.
Eggplant	75-90	May 15 – 25		50 plants	3 ft.	2½ – 3 ft.	
Kale	50-70	Mar 25 – Apr 5		½ oz.	3 ft.	10 in.	½ in.
Kohlrabi	50-70	Apr 1 – 15	Sep 20 – 25	½ oz.	3 ft.	10 in.	½ in.
Lettuce	60-85	Apr 1 – May 15	Sep 1 – 15	½ oz.	2 – 2½ ft.	10 – 12 in.	½ in.
Mustard	40-50	Mar 25 – May 1	Aug 1 – 30	½ oz.	2 ft.	1 in.	½ in.
Okra	55-60	May 10 – 25		1 oz.	3 – 3½ ft.	6 in.	1 in.
Onion (mature)	100-120	Mar 25 – Apr 15	Sep 1 – Dec 31	300 plants	1 – 2 ft.	3 – 4 in.	¾ in.
Peas, garden	60-80	Mar 25 – Apr 10		1 lb.	2½ ft.	1 in.	1½ – 2 in.
Peas, southern	60-70	May 1 – 15		½ lb.	3 ft.	4 – 6 in.	1½ – 2 in.
Pepper	65-80	May 15 – 30		50 plants	2½ ft.	1½ – 2 ft.	
Potato, Irish	70-90	Apr 1 – 15		1 peck	2½ – 3 ft.	10 – 14 in.	5 in.
Potato, Sweet	90-150	May 15 – Jun 5		100 plants	3½ ft.	12 in.	
Radish	25-30	Mar 25 – May 1	Aug 1 – 20	1 oz.	1½ ft.	1 in.	1½ in.
Spinach	40-45	Apr 1 – 20	Aug 10 – Sep 20	1 oz.	1½ - 2 ft.	1 – 2 in.	¾ in.
Squash, bush	50-55	May 15 – 30		1 oz.	3 – 4 ft.	2 ft.	1½ - 2 in.
Squash, Winter	85-90	May 15 – 30		½ oz.	5 ft.	3 ft.	1½ - 2 in.
Tomato	70-85	May 15 – 30		50 plants	3 – 4 ft.	2½ - 3 ft.	
Turnip	45-65	Mar 25 – May 1	Aug 5 – Sep 20	½ oz.	1 – 2 ft.	1 – 2 in.	½ in.
Watermelon	80-90	May 10 - 20		1 oz.	10 ft.	8 – 10 ft.	1½ in.

PLANTS TO “KEEP RABBITS AWAY”

Often, integrating plants that rabbits avoid will protect other plants in the area. Research has named the following as plants avoided by rabbits...unless they're seriously hungry.

Onions	Lamb's Ear	Leeks	Adam's needle	Asparagus
Herbs	Summer Squash	Tarragon	Most Tomatoes	Marjoram
Rhubarb	Mint	Ornamental Grasses	Basil	Peony
Oregano	Creeping phlox	Parsley	Primrose	Lavender
Salvia	Daylily	Sedum	Foxglove	Bulbs
Wild Ginger	Hyacinth	Columbine	Daffodils	Ladybells
Annuals	Vines	Wax Begonia	Trumpet Vine	Ageratum
Goosberry	Perennials	Bee Balm		

PLANTS THAT DEER DON'T LIKE

Aleratum	Aloe	Snap Dragon	Astilbe	Foxglove
Dahlia	Coneflowers	Gaillardia	Sunflowers	Iris
Bee Balm	Poppy	Rosemary	Salvia	Dusty
MillerMarigold	Wisteria	Zinnia	Periwinkle	Parsley
Daffodil	Forget Me Not	Four O'Clocks	Dianthus	Houttuynia
Sweet Pea	Morning Glory			

STARTING YOUR OWN SEEDS INDOORS

PLANTS TO START INDOORS	DATE TO START INDOORS	DATE TO TRANSPLANT TO GARDEN
Cabbage*	March 1	March 25
Broccoli*	March 1	March 25
Brussels Sprouts*	March 5	April 5
Cauliflower	March 5	March 25
Tomatoes	April 15	May 20
Peppers	April 15	May 20
Cucumbers	April 15	May 20
Squash	April 25	May 20
Melons	April 15	May 20

*these crops can be planted for summer and fall harvesting

PREPARE YOUR SOIL

Potting “soil” from a garden center or hardware store doesn't look or feel anything like what you'd find in your back garden. It is sterile and soil-less, usually containing some mix of perlite, vermiculite, sand, sphagnum, and compost. Either buy potting soil (from a garden store) or use your own garden soil. If you use your own soil, crumble it by hand and put it on a metal pan in your oven. Bake it at 250 degrees for 15 minutes. This should kill the insects and germs in the soil. Remember to let the soil cool down before you plant your seeds.

PUT SOIL IN CONTAINERS

Use either trays, cups, pots or soil cubes (you can purchase these). Make certain the containers you use are clean and sterile. Use trays if you are starting more than 40 seeds. Fill the containers with “soil”. Pack the soil in so it doesn't shift after you add the seed. Water the “soil” until it is saturated (this may take a couple soakings).

PLANT THE SEEDS

Seeds can be encouraged to germinate by prompting them with a cool period. You can accomplish this by storing your seeds in the refrigerator at home for 3 – 4 weeks before planting. Plant 3 – 4 seeds in cups or small containers. Plant rows of seeds in your trays. Try to plant a few extra in case all of them don't make it. If you have extra plants, give them to a friend. When the plants have their first full set of leaves, thin any

crowded seedlings by pulling out the smaller plants. Be sure to leave enough plants. Label the name of the vegetables on the trays or cups.

WATER THE SEEDS

Water the seeds so the soil is moist, not wet. An ideal way to water is from below by setting the containers in a tray filled with water so the soil “wicks” up only the water needed to saturate the container. Additional water can be drained off. There should be no puddles of water on top of the soil. Even watering will encourage the best germination results.

COVER THE CONTAINERS FOR THE FIRST 5 DAYS

Put glass or plastic over your trays. Cover cups or pots with foil or plastic wrap. This seals the moisture in. Check the moisture level of the soil but you shouldn’t need to water for the next 5 days. Then take off the cover and begin watering daily.

KEEP PLANTS WARM AND LIGHTED

Seeds will sprout better in warm temperatures. Some plants won’t germinate unless they are at a certain temperature. Keep the plants at 65 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit. If you keep plants warm by placing them next to a heater, remember to check the moisture level of the soil so they don’t dry out. Once sprouted, your seedlings will also need a strong light source. A sunny window sill can be a good source of light but can be inconsistent if late winter clouds dim the available light. Ordinary 48” fluorescent lamps raised about 6” – 10” above the seedlings will provide the plants with an even and constant source of light. You can then set your lamps on a timer for 14 – 16 hours of light per day.

FEED YOUR PLANTS

When the seeds sprout, you can begin adding plant food to your water. Use seaweed powder, fish emulsion or some other organic plant food. Be sure to read the directions for appropriate applications.

WEEDING

“A weed is a plant whose virtue is not yet known.”

“Experience is the best teacher, as every gardener who has ever let a weed go to seed knows.”

Weeds are something that every gardener has to deal with. They can be helpful and/or nuisance. They can reduce crop yields by competing for water, nutrients and light. They can harbor insect and disease pests, and some are poisonous.

Many weeds also serve a positive role in the garden. Many are edible themselves. Some are leguminous and therefore add usable nitrogen to the soil. Weeds can also serve to “disguise” food crops from potential pests because they have strong aromas or are attractive food sources for insects.

Here are some tactics to help you work with the weeds in your garden:

CATCH THE PROBLEM EARLY

Let the condition of the garden guide your efforts to reduce weeds in your garden. You won’t need to pull, hoe or rake every little green thing as soon as it pops up. Wait for the plants to get a certain height, when the soil is slightly moist and you’ll be able to lift the nasties with ease out of your plot without disturbing the surrounding area. But, be careful of letting any weed go to seed...you may regret it.

MANAGING THE WEEDS TO SUIT YOU

Learn to recognize some weeds. You may learn something about medicinal properties or even a new food source. At least you’ll be sure not to pull out some of your early sprouting perennials. Leaving in a few lambs quarters or purslane here and there to add to a summer salad is not going to be significant competition for your lettuce or cabbage as long as you keep them under control. For some there is an acceptable level of weed occurrence.



CROWD THEM OUT

This method works beautifully but takes a bit of experience to get it right. The idea here is to get your food crops established and spaced so that the weeds don't get the necessary sunlight required for growth. While this may not eliminate all your weeds, it makes them easier to pull once discovered. Remember to follow established guidelines for thinning once the crops get big enough.

MULCH, MULCH, MULCH.

The weight and density of newspapers, grass clippings, shredded leaves or straw will all smother weed seedlings if layered on thickly. Newspapers should be saturated with water when laid down and may need weighting for a week or so to keep them from blowing away. Pile woodchips or shredded leaves on top of the layers of newspapers. Over the growing season these materials will gradually breakdown and become part of the soil. Consider using uncolored newspapers printed with soy ink to reduce the possibility of introducing toxins into your soil.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Rodal's Successful Organic Gardening Controlling Weeds. By Erin Hynes. 1195. Rodale Press, Inc. Emmaus, PA.

CONTROLLING INSECT PESTS WITHOUT PESTICIDES

Many gardeners often turn to chemical pesticides for control of pest problems. These toxins are sometimes very effective at reducing pest insect populations. But, they also:

Kill beneficial insects and microorganisms; pose a threat to the health of the gardener and his/her family; encourage increasingly pesticide-resistant insect species; smell bad; leach into groundwater and pollute aquifers often create more problems than they solve.

The majority of the insects you find in your garden are beneficial to the natural balance of the urban garden and, therefore, to your vegetable production. Organic or "natural" pest controls can work in your favor to balance the amounts of pest insects to beneficial insects so that any one crop is not destroyed. These products also quickly break down in the environment and won't create long term negative effects for the environment.

Consider the following when you are frustrated by insect-damaged plants:

START WITH AND ENCOURAGE HEALTHY PLANTS IN YOUR GARDEN.

Stressed plants encourage attack by insect and make plants more vulnerable to disease.

Removing diseased or dying plants immediately will reduce the chances of more plants suffering a similar fate. Watch for early signs of pest problems and take preventative measures as soon as possible. Water well and keep the whole garden "clean" by removing debris and dead plant material.

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR SOME LEVEL OF DAMAGE.

Most of us have become conditioned to expect fruits and vegetables without irregularities. Produce with cosmetic defects (spots and discoloring) or variety in size and shape are often rejected from retail chains. Some damage from insects is bound to occur. Often the damage is insignificant and will not harm the long-term health of the plant. Try and teach yourself and your neighbors to live with it.

GET TO KNOW THE NAMES AND LIFE CYCLES OF THE PESTS IN YOUR GARDEN.

Not only will you be able to deal with these harmful insects properly but you can also avoid killing some of the "beneficials" by mistake. Getting to know the insects that are beneficial in the garden will help you encourage their populations while discouraging the "pest" insects. Predaceous insects like the praying mantis and lady beetles that eat many of the pest insects can be purchased through mail order catalogs.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO HAND-PICK SOME OF THE HARMFUL INSECTS IN YOUR GARDEN.

Every few days look over your vegetables thoroughly (including the undersides of the leaves) pick off and squash or otherwise dispose of unwanted critters.

ROTATE YOUR CROPS.

Don't plant the same vegetables in the same place year after year. Since different species need different minerals to thrive, moving plants around from year to year will encourage stronger plants by balancing the soil nutrient loss in any one area. Rotating your crops will also limit the available host plant species for pest insects and therefore limit their population.

ASK YOUR NEIGHBOR WHAT HE/SHE DOES TO DISCOURAGE DAMAGE FROM INSECTS.

Sometimes you can learn effective, simple and inexpensive methods that have been passed down over generations and have proven worthily of some attention.

PLANT DECOY CROPS OR SET TRAPS.

Planting one or two squash plants to coincide with expected squash bug population increases will allow you the opportunity to destroy the majority of pest insects before they can become a problem. You sacrifice a few to save money.

MANY GARDENERS ALSO USE HOMEMADE TRAPS TO KEEP POPULATIONS IN CHECK.

For example, sticky yellow cards can be made and positioned to trap and kill white fly. Shallow pans filled with beer and placed near crops will attract and kill plenty of slugs.

PLANT COMMUNITIES OF PLANTS.

Companion plants, when grown together, promote one another's healthy development. They do this by deterring pest insects or providing necessary nutrients for growth. They can be planted adjacent to one another or used in a rotation of plantings to take advantage of their beneficial characteristics. A good example of this is the "Three Sisters": corn, beans and squash planted by Native Americans.