



SWEETWATER
GARDEN

Vegetable Growing Guide



Roots, Remedies & Routines

For a flavorful Life

**Welcome to Your Sweetwater Garden
Vegetable Planting Guide!**

In this guide, you will find concise instructions on how to sprout, grow, and harvest your home garden. Whether new to gardening or just needing a quick garden reference, this is your go-to guide for starting and maintaining your vegetable garden.

Notes About Our Area

Frost Free Dates

Riverton, WY (Fremont county):

Temperature	Chance of frost								
	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%
Spring 32°	Jun 18	Jun 10	Jun 4	May 30	May 26	May 21	May 16	May 11	May 3
Spring 28°	May 23	May 18	May 14	May 11	May 8	May 6	May 3	Apr 29	Apr 24
Spring 24°	May 9	May 5	May 2	Apr 29	Apr 27	Apr 24	Apr 21	Apr 18	Apr 14
Fall 32°	Sep 3	Sep 7	Sep 10	Sep 13	Sep 15	Sep 18	Sep 20	Sep 24	Sep 28
Fall 28°	Sep 14	Sep 18	Sep 20	Sep 23	Sep 25	Sep 27	Sep 30	Oct 3	Oct 6
Fall 24°	Sep 21	Sep 26	Sep 30	Oct 3	Oct 6	Oct 9	Oct 12	Oct 15	Oct 20

USDA Hardiness zones:

Riverton is listed as a hardiness zone 5a (-20 to -15 F) prior to 2023 Riverton was listed as zone 4b (-25 to -20)

These zones were updated in 2023, I do not agree that Riverton is a zone 5. I would plant perennial vegetable plants that are hardy to a zone 4.

Soil Quality

Our soil is poor. More specifically most soils in our area are heavy clay that compacts easily. Also, they are alkaline and have very low levels of organic materials.

Solutions:

Add compost or soil pep and Humic. This will loosen clay, make soil less alkaline, and help hold water. These products are also the best to use in sandy soils, as it adds organics and helps maintain soil moisture. Whatever you do, don't add lime or wood ashes to our alkaline soils as these make it even more alkaline. Another material that does not help our soils is Gypsum. Gypsum contains calcium, which we already have high levels of in our area.

Open Pollinated, Heirloom, Hybrid, GMO

Open Pollinated

Simply, open pollinated seeds are seeds produced from crops that are allowed to pollinate naturally by means of insects, birds, wind, and other natural mechanisms. Some seeds self-pollinate and don't require pollinators.

Heirloom

There is no officially accepted definition of "heirloom". In common use, the term is universally used to indicate an open-pollinated seed which has remained consistent for several decades, usually 30 years. Some people claim that heirloom seed are the "original" variety of a plant, but that's not necessarily true. If you trace a plants genetics back far enough you will find that these now heirloom varieties likely came from an intentional or natural crossing of two different plants.

Hybrid

The term "hybrid" indicates the crossing of two plants whether intentional or not. Hybrids are frequently frowned upon online, usually because they are confused with GMOs, but also frequently because some claim that the seed companies who sell them have engineered the seed to be "sterile" or unable to reproduce so that one cannot save their seed. This is not true.

It is true that saving your seed from a hybrid is not advisable, but saved seeds will grow, it is just unlikely that your second-generation plant will produce similar results to the original plant. The seedling will take on more traits of one of the parent plants.

GMO

The term GMO is a term that is feared, misunderstood, and misused, leading to confusion about what a GMO Plant means. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) are living things, including seeds, and plants who's DNA has been engineered outside the natural process of cross-pollination to inherit desirable traits.

When we see anti-GMO social media posts or speak with people about what GMO means to them we find that most people don't know why GMO is bad they just know it is. This lack of understanding of GMO is frequently dragging non-GMO seeds and plants, such as Hybrids, into the discussion. We do have concerns with GMO, because the science is moving faster than the protections, labeling laws, and crop protocols.

For us, we do not carry any type of GMO vegetables, or seed at Sweetwater Garden.

Know Your Soil and Its Drainage Rate

Soil types and textures:

Clay Soil

When wet, this soil is lumpy and sticky. When dry, the soil is rocky and hard. Poor drainage and low oxygen levels. Lack of drainage usually needs to be remedied, using sand and/ or soil pep.

Sandy Soil

A gritty, sandy texture that dries out fast and drains quickly. Holds fewer nutrients than other soils. Requires soil amendments to bolster nutrient content. Suitable for vegetable root crops, such as carrot, parsnip, and beet, plants like pepper corn, squash, and salad crops also prefer sandy soils.

Silty Soil

A soft and fluffy texture that holds moisture very well. Nutrient content is plentiful as well. Less than adequate drainage, but otherwise healthy soil. Adding compost or soil pep can help with drainage. Suitable for most vegetable and fruit crops.

pH Balance of Soil

pH is simply the acidity or alkaline levels of a substance. When it comes to soil, it is important because certain plant diseases or fungi thrive in highly acidic or basic conditions. Most plants need slightly acidic soil to grow so they can properly absorb iron. Our soils are naturally alkaline, we recommend soil pep, compost, and Humic to bring soil pH down. The right pH level allows microorganisms to convert nitrogen into a form plants can absorb. A pH of 7.0 is adequate for most vegetable crops.

Know How to Water Each Plant

Don't overwater – Water consistently yet consciously

Root Watering

Remember to aim your water stream toward the roots. Avoid getting water on the leaves or foliage of your plants, as moist leaves can lead to diseases.

Morning Watering

The first drink of water in the morning is usually the most important. It gives your plant a head start on the day by allowing it to consume the water without having to fight against evaporation. Also, if foliage of the plant gets wet, it has time to dry over the course of the day. Whereas, if the leaves and foliage of the plant remains moist overnight, it may be detrimental to plant health.

Mulch

Mulches can be a great option for preserving soil moisture. They help reduce surface runoff and slow evaporation.

Know About Companion Planting

Sometimes known as crop rotation or intercropping, companion planting follows an age-old belief that some plants may be mutually beneficial for each other. Although the idea of companion planting is not a hard science and still leaves much up for debate and conjecture, there are some proven situations of plants thriving with the help of other plants. For example, cover crops are used to provide weed suppression and pest control, while replenishing depleted soils of vital nitrogen. Clover, mustard, rye, and wheat are common cover crops.

Marigolds are also popularly intercropped throughout gardens because they emit a chemical into the soil known as limonene, which is a pesticide.

In simple terms, companion planting aims to create diversity in the garden while fighting against monoculture, which is known to foster disease and pests. Whether it's simple crop rotation or intercropping with cover crops, diversity will invite beneficial insects and pollinators to help turn your seasonal garden into a healthy and vibrant ecosystem.



Artichoke

Cynara cardunculus var. scolymus

Artichoke is a flower in the sunflower family that has been harvested before being allowed to bloom, remaining tender and edible to the human palate. Artichokes thrive in many hard-to-grow spaces. Artichokes can be left to flower as a garden ornamental as well as being harvested.

Growing:

Artichokes should be about 4 weeks old when transplanted to the garden. They prefer cooler conditions but will perform well if shaded. Plant 48" apart in the garden. Plants may become top-heavy during fruiting and will require some staking. Add a top layer of mulch and shade to keep the soil cool in warm summer temperatures. Artichoke is a heavy feeder and thrives from fertilizing every two weeks during the season.

Harvesting:

Regardless of color or variety, artichoke is ready to harvest when the buds' bracts (outer protective leaves) begin to slightly open. Some varieties will mature a consistent green color while some varieties will mature a deep purple. Unharvested artichoke buds will bloom into a stunning 3-5" wide violet flower, though no longer edible. Lower buds on the stalk will not mature to be as large as the top buds and can be harvested when about 3" in diameter.

Hardiness Zone: Annual (perennial zone 3-9)

Days To Maturity:

Days To Germination: 10-21

Seeding Depth: ½"

Plant Spacing: 48"

Plant Height: 36-48"

Row Spacing: 72"

Growth Habit: Weedy and bushy upright

Soil Type: Sandy, composted, loamy, well-drained

Temp Preference: 50-80 °F

Light Preference: Full sun – Partial Sun

Troubleshooting: Avoid overwatering, causing slimy mold and rot. Monitor regularly for aphids, mites, and earwigs.

Asparagus

Asparagus officinalis



Asparagus is a long-term perennial vegetable that requires planning, patience, and dedication yet is always worth the wait. Asparagus is notorious for not being ready for harvest until its third year but, once established, will produce seasonal spears for several decades. At any time while growing asparagus, spears can be whitened or “blanched” by limiting sun exposure, creating a uniquely flavorful variety devoid of the grassy, earthy chlorophyll notes of a green crop.

Sowing And Growing:

Seeds are best started indoors 8-10 weeks before the final spring frost. Sow seeds ½” deep into high-quality potting mix. Transplant once all danger of frost has passed. In the garden, dig a 6-12” deep and 18” wide trench for transplants. Spread a 1” layer of compost at the bottom of the trench before filling with soil. As mentioned asparagus requires three years until harvest but will produce for more than twenty years once established.

Harvesting:

In the third year, harvest young asparagus spears with a sharp knife at the base once they have reached 7-9” tall and about the thickness of a pencil. Harvest often to encourage further growth. More established plants will have a harvest season of about 8 weeks while younger plants may have a window of 4 weeks. After harvest, plants will sprout asparagus greens to restore lost energy to the roots.

Hardiness Zone: Perennial 3-9

Days To Maturity: 3 years

Days To Germination: 7-21

Seeding Depth: ½”

Plant Spacing: 12-18”

Plant Height: 7-9”

Row Spacing: 36”

Growth Habit: Upright

Soil Type: Sandy, composted, loamy, well-drained

Temp Preference: 65-85 °F

Light Preference: Full sun – Partial Sun

Troubleshooting: Allow soil to dry between watering, as asparagus is highly susceptible to fungus and mold.

Bush Bean

Phaseolus vulgaris



Also known as snap bean, it is one of the most popular annual vegetables grown in home gardens. Germinating in just under a week, bush beans are harvestable as soon as 50-60 days and are an ideal introductory crop for children and beginners. Unlike the prolific and vining pole bean, the bush bean matures at about 18-24" tall without the need for a trellis support.

Sowing And Growing:

Seeds should be sown directly into the afterfinal frost. Sow 2-3 seeds 1 "deep and 2-3" apart in moist, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.0-6.8. Thin out leaving the strongest starts every 18-24" in the garden. Beans need light and consistent water. Water as close to the root as possible to prevent stem rot and mildew. Plants thrive from a top layer of mulch to help cool soil and roots. Avoid excessively high nitrogen fertilizers which will cause excessive vegetative growth with minimal bean pod production.

Harvesting:

Most varieties of bush bean are ready to harvest in 50-60 days from sowing or once the pods are about 3-5" long. Harvest often to encourage fruiting and to ensure pods do not dehydrate on the vine. Although some pods may pull cleanly from the vine, use a knife or shears for more fibrous pods to avoid accidental damage to the plant. Like many crops in the garden, it is widely believed that beans are best harvested in the morning for optimal sugar content..

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 50-60

Days To Germination: 5-8

Seeding Depth: 1"

Plant Spacing: 18"

Plant Height: 12-24"

Row Spacing: 24"

Growth Habit: Bushy upright

Soil Type: Sandy, composted, loamy, well-drained

Temp Preference: 65-85 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Water soil directly to avoid leaf saturation, causing rot and mildew. Monitor for thrips, aphids, and leaf beetles.



Pole Bean

Phaseolus vulgaris

Like bush beans, the vining pole bean is another familiar summer annual found in many home gardens. Pole bean is quick to mature and ready to harvest in about 70 days and, if given plenty of climbing space, will vine taller than 20 feet. Pole beans boast sweeter, bigger, and more abundant fruits with a much wider harvest window. Try growing pole beans as a quickly vining, yet deliciously edible, privacy wall or cover.

Sowing And Growing:

Pole bean can be started indoors, but performs best if sown directly after the final spring frost. Sow 2-3 seeds 1" deep and 2-3 "apart in moist, organically rich, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.0-6.8. Select the strongest starts and thin out to every 6-8" in the garden as true leaves are established. Pole beans require immediate trellis support as seedlings will be looking to vine as soon as true leaves emerge. Plants thrive from a top layer of mulch to help cool soil and roots. Avoid Nitrogen-rich fertilizers which will cause excessive vegetative growth with minimal bean pod production.

Harvesting:

Most varieties of pole bean are ready to harvest at about 70-80 days from sowing or once the pods are 3-5" long. Harvest often to encourage fruiting and to ensure pods do not dehydrate on the vine. Although some pods may pull cleanly from the vine, use a knife or shears for more fibrous pods to avoid accidental damage to the plant. Like many crops in the garden, it is widely believed that pole beans are best harvested in the morning for optimal sugar content.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 63-80

Days To Germination: 5-8

Seeding Depth: ½"

Plant Spacing: 6-8"

Plant Height: 10-20'

Row Spacing: 18"

Growth Habit: Vining

Soil Type: Organically fertile, moist, well drained

Temp Preference: 65-85 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Water soil directly to avoid leaf saturation, causing rot and mildew. Monitor for thrips, aphids, and leaf beetles.

Beet

Beta vulgaris



Beets are a sweet, sugary, and short-term cool weather favorite able to be sown multiple times during the year for quick and successive harvests. Like carrots, radishes, and many other root vegetables, beet quickly matures and thrives when sown directly outside in the garden bed. Although widely known for being a deep burgundy color, the hardy beetroot is available in many shapes and colors including heirloom classics Golden Detroit, and Chioggia.

Sowing And Growing:

Beet is a cool weather favorite best sown directly outdoors 4-5 weeks before final spring frost or 4-5 weeks before the first autumn frost. Sow 3-4 seeds ½" deep and 1-2" apart in fertile, organically rich, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.0-7.0. Seeds germinate in 5-10 days, thin best starts to ever 3-4" as true leaves establish. Beet seeds may be pre-soaked for 24 hours to encourage germination. Beets can be sown every 2-3 weeks for replete season-long harvests. Avoid using fertilizers high in nitrogen causing plants to produce plentiful vegetation, but smaller roots. A top layer of mulch will help roots cool and retain moisture.

Harvesting:

Most varieties of beet are ready to harvest in about 50-60 days from sowing or when showing 1" in diameter above soil, but will remain tender even up to 3-4" in diameter. In compacted soils, carefully loosen soil around roots before harvesting with help of a gardening fork. Beet greens can be harvested like lettuce or any culinary herb when 2-3" tall. Small tender greens can be enjoyed fresh in a salad mix while larger, coarser greens taste best when lightly sautéed.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 43-65

Days To Germination: 5-14

Seeding Depth: ½"

Plant Spacing: 3-4"

Plant Height: 36-48'

Row Spacing: 12"

Growth Habit: Rooted and leafy upright

Soil Type: Loose, sandy, loamy, well-drained

Temp Preference: 55-70 °F

Light Preference: Full sun – partial shade

Troubleshooting: Monitor for aphids and leafhoppers which may lead to leaf yellowing and leaf-spotting disease.

Broccoli

Brassica oleracea var. italica



Broccoli is a timeless staple of the home garden. Broccoli is a hardy frost tolerant favorite, rich in vitamins. Like other Brassicas, broccoli requires very similar growing conditions with similar harvest windows like cabbage, cauliflower, and kale.

Sowing And Growing:

Broccoli is a cool weather full-sun crop, for best results 6-8 week old plants should be planted in the garden after the final frost. Broccoli prefers a rich organic, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.0-7.0. Plants should be spaced 18" apart in the garden row, with 24-36" between rows. Broccoli heads grow fullest with full sun but will tolerate light shade. Mulch the soil around plants to help maintain cooler soil temperatures.

Harvesting:

Most varieties of broccoli are ready to harvest in about 85 days from sowing, or approximately 40 days if transplants are planted. Using a knife, remove the main head above the smaller florets once it reaches about 5-6", allowing secondary side shoots to continue maturing. Heads will taste bitter if no longer compact and have begun to flower. Like other Brassicas, the entire broccoli plant is harvestable and edible and considered to taste best after a light frost.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 85-90

Days To Germination: 5-14

Seeding Depth: ½"

Plant Spacing: 18"

Plant Height: 24-30'

Row Spacing: 24-36"

Growth Habit: Upright

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 40-70 °F

Light Preference: Full sun – partial shade

Troubleshooting: Broccoli has no serious diseases but watch for cabbage worms, flea beetles, thrips, slugs, and aphids.

Brussels Sprouts

Brassica oleracea var. gemmifera



Brussels sprouts look, taste, and grow like mini cabbage. Like other Brassicas they are tolerant to northern climates and light frost. Although it may take up to three months for a harvest, the sturdy decorative stalks will produce long after the warm season.

Sowing And Growing:

Brussels sprouts are a cool weather crop. 6-8 week old transplants should be planted in the garden after the final spring frost. Plants should be spaced 24-30" apart in the garden. Plants will mature into sturdy 30-36" tall stalks without the need for staking, but require consistent moisture and routine fertilizing. As sprouts emerge on the stalk, prune back yellowing leaves and lower half leaves for the most robust sprout production.

Harvesting:

Most varieties can be harvested at approximately 50 days from planting transplants or when fruit is firm and 1-2" in diameter. Individual Brussels sprouts mature from the bottom up meaning the ripest and most mature sprouts will always be lower on the stalk until harvested. To harvest, simply cut with a knife or twist sprouts from the base, detaching them from the rest of the stalk. Stalks may be cut and harvested whole by cutting the entire plant off at the base when all sprouts are firm.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 80-100

Days To Germination: 7-14

Seeding Depth: ½"

Plant Spacing: 24-30"

Plant Height: 24-30'

Row Spacing: 30-36"

Growth Habit: Upright stalk

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 45-75 °F

Light Preference: Full sun – partial shade

Troubleshooting: Monitor regularly for cabbage worms, flea beetles, thrips, slugs, and aphids.

Cabbage

Brassica oleracea var. capitata



Cabbage is often mistakenly thought to be one of the more intimidating, difficult vegetable crops to grow. Despite the slander, cabbage is a Brassica no more challenging to grow than kale, broccoli, or collards. Whether as a garden crop or flowering ornamental variety, cabbage is available anywhere from rich burgundy to a familiar pale green and easy enough to grow.

Sowing And Growing:

Cabbage is a cool weather crop and can be planted in the spring as well as in the fall. Cabbage performs best when 6-8 week old transplants are planted in the garden after the last frost, or 6-8 weeks before the first autumn frost. Cabbage prefer organically rich, well-drained soils with a pH of 6.0-7.0. Plants should be spaced 18-24" in the garden. Cabbage requires regular moisture during vegetative growth to keep heads from splitting before harvest. Plants are heavy feeders and thrive from fertilization

Harvesting:

Depending on the specific cultivar and when planted, most varieties of cabbage are ready to harvest at about 50 to 60 days after planting. Using a knife cut the heads at the base and remove yellow leaves from the cut head, keeping healthy loose green leaves attached to help protect cabbage heads during storage.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 90-120

Days To Germination: 5-14

Seeding Depth: 1/4"

Plant Spacing: 18-24"

Plant Height: 12-30'

Row Spacing: 18"

Growth Habit: Leafy mounding

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 55-75 °F

Light Preference: Full sun – partial shade

Troubleshooting: No serious diseases but monitor regularly for cabbage worms, flea beetles, thrips, slugs, and aphids.



Carrot

Daucus carota subsp. Sativus

A sugary sweet root vegetable second only to the beet in overall sugar content. Carrot is one of the easiest, quickest, and most satisfying garden crops and lends itself to many savory dishes. Although considered a predominantly orange vegetable, the carrot is available in a wide selection of heirloom colors such as red, purple, yellow, and white. Carrots can be sown every couple weeks for successive season-long harvesting

Sowing And Growing:

Carrot is a cool weather crop best sown directly into the garden 2-3 weeks before the final spring frost. Sow every 2 weeks after for successive harvests. Plant 2-3 seeds $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep and 1-2" apart in organically rich, loose well-drained soil. Seeds germinate in 14-21 days, thin back to 1 plant every 2-4" as true leaves establish. Carrots require a deep well-tilled garden for straight tap-root growth. Avoid using nitrogen-rich fertilizers which are known to cause root abnormalities, as well as excessive greens and weak root development.

Harvesting:

Most varieties of carrots are ready for harvest about 70 to 80 days from sowing, while smaller varieties are ready a few weeks sooner. Regardless of color, carrots are usually ripe for harvest when the root begins to show above soil. For hardened soils, use a hand cultivator or a garden hori-hori knife to harvest.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 60-80

Days To Germination: 14-21

Seeding Depth: 1/2"

Plant Spacing: 2-4"

Plant Height: 6-18"

Row Spacing: 16-24"

Growth Habit: Taproot, upright

Soil Type: loose, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 55-75 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: No serious diseases but can be susceptible to aster yellows. Watch for carrot rust fly and wireworm.

Cauliflower

Brassica oleracea var. botrytis



Cauliflower is one of the more challenging Brassicas in the home garden because it does not perform well in either hot or cold climates, yet excels in moderate regions with full sun. Although cauliflower heads (curds) are thought to be white, they naturally develop green or purple and only become white through a labor-intensive process called “blanching” in which the outer leaves are bound together to keep the young heads from developing color from sun exposure.

Sowing And Growing:

A temperamental and challenging cool season favorite best planted in early spring or fall.

Transplant 4-6 week old plants into the garden after final frost. Plant in organic rich, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.0-7.0. Plants should be spaced 18-24” apart. Although some varieties are self-blanching, cauliflower is not naturally white and requires leaves to be bound over the heads. Cauliflower thrive from nitrogen-rich fertilizer.

Harvesting:

Similar to cabbaged, cauliflower is ready to harvest when compact, firm, and has reached the desired color. Use a harvesting knife to gently cut the head loose from the stem and base, while leaving the large surrounding leaves intact to the head. It is natural for some heads to develop undersize and underweight, yet still fully mature in color. Harvest these smaller heads sooner because they will not increase in size.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 70-120

Days To Germination: 7-14

Seeding Depth: 1/2”

Plant Spacing: 18”

Plant Height: 36-48”

Row Spacing: 36-48”

Growth Habit: Leafy mounding

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 55-75 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Monitor regularly for cabbage worms, flea beetles, thrips, slugs, and aphids.



Celery

Apium graveolens var. dulce

Celery is one of the most popular vegetable crops yet is seldom grown by home gardeners. Much like lettuce, broccoli, and kale, garden celery can be harvested repeatedly throughout the season as a “cut and come again” variety able to be pushed up until the frost.

Sowing And Growing:

A cool weather favorite best planted in the garden as a 10-12 week transplant after the last frost in the spring. Celery prefers organic, moist well-drained soil with a pH of 6-7. Plant 12” apart in the garden. Celery requires steady watering and a cooling top layer of mulch to keep from bolting. It will also benefit from additional compost throughout the season with properly drained and ventilated soil.

Harvesting:

Celery can be traditionally harvested whole or in “cut and come again” fashion. Harvest outer stalks when at least 6-8” tall by cutting them from the base, allowing inner stalks to continue producing. Be careful of shallow roots cutting above ground. Darker green stalks will yield more nutrition but will also have a more coarse texture.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 110-130

Days To Germination: 14-21

Seeding Depth: No Cover

Plant Spacing: 9-12”

Plant Height: 12-24”

Row Spacing: 24”

Growth Habit: Leafy, upright

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 60-70 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Susceptible to root rot from poorly drained soils. Watch for aphids, slugs, and any kind of worms.

Chard

Beta vulgaris var. cicla



Chard is a leafy, colorful, and quickly maturing relative to the garden beet. Tolerant of both light frost and summer heat, chard is often recommended as an easy, yet rewarding, crop for children or novice gardeners. Chard can be sown nearly anytime of season for either a midsummer harvest or even a late fall crop. Available in a variety of colors, try growing chard as a bright and vibrant addition to the garden.

Sowing And Growing:

Chard grows best in cool gardens yet is quite tolerant of heat. Chard is best if sown directly 2-3 weeks before the final spring frost or 5-6 weeks before the first fall frost. Chard seeds are often pre-soaked for 4-8 hours to accelerate germination. Thin back starts to about 12' apart in the garden as true leaves appear. For best flavor and texture keep plants under 12" tall.

Harvesting:

Most varieties are ready to harvest in about 50 to 60 days from sowing while the first and youngest leaves can be harvested at about 30 days. For "cut and come again" harvesting, cut the stalks carefully 1-2" above the ground so as not to harm the center of the plant. Harvest larger outer leaves for continual seasonal growth, or cut stalks 3-4" from the base, allowing plants to grow again. Chard plants may also be harvested entirely whole from the base like celery.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 50-60

Days To Germination: 7-14

Seeding Depth: 1/2"

Plant Spacing: 12"

Plant Height: 12-18"

Row Spacing: 18-24"

Growth Habit: Leafy upright

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 60-80 °F

Light Preference: Full sun – Partial sun

Troubleshooting: Susceptible to fungal leaf spotting, mildews, and mold from oversaturation. Watch for aphids and flea beetles.

Collards

Brassica oleracea var. botrytis



Collard greens are a broadleaf nutrient-rich Brassica, relative to the similar-tasting broccoli, cabbage, and kale. Collard greens are cold hardy and even thought to taste best after a light frost or two. Collards grow in a similar look and texture to kale and cabbage leaves, yet are far tenderer and leafier greens. Like broccoli and kale, collards are a “cut and come again” crop that will continue to deliver well into the fall.

Sowing And Growing:

A cool-hardy crop best if planted as 4-6 week old transplants into the garden after final frost or, planted 3-4 weeks before the first fall frost. Plant 12-18” apart in well-drained garden soil with a pH of 6-6.5. Water regularly to keep collard greens from drying and becoming bitter, but do not oversaturate causing mold, mildew, and rot. Collards thrive from a well-composted soil and require minimal fertilizing.

Harvesting:

About 8-10 weeks after transplanting, collards are ready for harvest. Like with many “cut and come again” crops, harvest frequently to boost production. Collard leaves can be harvested at any size based on preference, but larger leaves become more coarse and bitter. Entire plants may be harvested whole, or simply pick the leaves from the bottom as needed to allow further production. For best flavor, allow greens to get a frost or two before harvesting.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 75-85

Days To Germination: 7-14

Seeding Depth: 1/4”

Plant Spacing: 12-18”

Plant Height: 10-12”

Row Spacing: 30”

Growth Habit: Upright

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 50-70 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: No serious diseases but monitor regularly for cabbage worms, flea beetles, thrips, aphids, and harlequin bugs.

Corn

Zea mays



Corn is an ancient wild grass and effortless, nearly foolproof summertime staple. Often known as “cob” or “ear”, the edible portion is actually the ripened flower, with the individual kernels in the husk each containing a seed for future propagation. Although sweet corn is the most popular variety, garden corn comes in a variety of flavors and colors including unique ornamental varieties.

Sowing And Growing:

Corn is a hardy full sun grass performing best when sown directly outdoors after the final spring frost. Plant seeds 1-2” deep and 3-4” apart in loose, organically rich, well-drained soil with a pH of 5.8-6.2. Corn germinates in 7-14 days, and thin out leaving the best starts 10-12” apart. Avoid overhead watering. To prevent cross-pollination from altering a corn crop, keep like varieties with like varieties. (SU with SU, SE with SE, SH2 with SH2, and Ornamental with Ornamental). Check individual seed packet to know whether a variety is Sugary (SU) Sugary Enhanced (SE), Supersweet (SH2), or Ornamental.

Harvesting:

Most varieties of corn are ready to harvest about 75 days from sowing. Corn only fruits once. Ears are ripe once they turn dark green, silks become brown, and kernels are plump. Test ripeness by squeezing kernels for a milk-like juice.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 60-90

Days To Germination: 7-14

Seeding Depth: 1”

Plant Spacing: 12”

Plant Height: 5-8’

Row Spacing: 30-36”

Growth Habit: Upright stalk

Soil Type: Sandy, composted, loamy, well-drained

Temp Preference: 75-90 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Raccoons are the most damaging pests, but watch for corn leaf aphids, flea beetles, and thrips. Water soil directly to avoid stalk saturation.

Cucumber

Cucumis sativus



Cucumber is one of the easiest and most productive summertime favorites suited for just about any home garden. Grown similarly to summer melons, cucumbers are heat and drought tolerant and, once matured, will produce vigorously well into fall. Whether small pickling cucumbers or a larger, more familiar slicing variety, cucumbers are available as either short convenient bush types or long, vining climbers.

Sowing And Growing:

Cucumber is a warm weather crop best when planting 4-6 week old plants after the last spring frost. Cucumbers prefer loamy, sandy, well-drained soil with a pH of 6-6.5. Plants should be spaced 36-48" apart, and planted on an 8" tall mound, provide a trellis to minimize crowding. Shallow roots will benefit from regular watering and a top layer of mulch. Bush varieties perform well in pots and containers also.

Harvesting:

Many varieties of cucumbers are ready for harvest at about 40-50 days after planting, while smaller pickling varieties may be ready sooner. Ripe cucumbers are solid green and firm, becoming bitter and yellow if left on the vine too long. Classic slicing cucumbers are sweetest when 7-9" long, becoming starchy and grainy when reaching 12" or more. Remove fruits with scissors or a knife rather than twisting or plucking to prevent damaging the vine.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 55-70

Days To Germination: 3-10

Seeding Depth: 1"

Plant Spacing: 36-48"

Plant Height: 6-12"

Row Spacing: 36-48"

Growth Habit: Vining or bush

Soil Type: Loamy, sandy, fertilized, well-drained

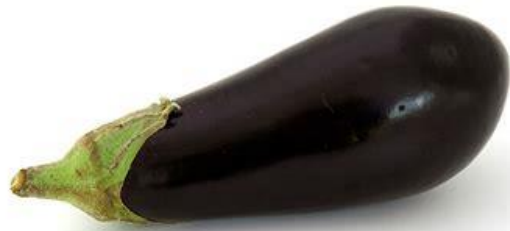
Temp Preference: 65-75 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Watch for cucumber beetles, squash bugs, and aphids. Mildew and leaf spotting may occur in poorly drained soils.

Eggplant

Solanum melongena



A short and compact fruiting vegetable that is often likened to a “small tree” growing in the garden. Eggplant matures at a convenient and sturdy 24-36” tall and, although related to the tomato, fruits very similarly to a pepper.

Sowing And Growing:

Eggplant is a full sun favorite. Transplant 8-10 week old plants into the garden after the final spring frost. Plants should be spaced 18-24”, and planted in a well-drained soil with a pH of 5.5-7.2. Cover soil with a layer of mulch and fertilize at least twice during growth stage. Stabilize plants with a pole or support, as they can become top-heavy during fruiting.

Harvesting:

Due to the protective and toxic solanine produced by members of the nightshade family, avoid consuming eggplant before completely ripened. Most eggplant varieties are ready for harvest about 70-90 days after transplanting. Harvest fruits before wrinkling and going to seed. Carefully snip each eggplant from the branch with scissors or a garden knife while leaving 1” of the stem on the fruit.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 100-120

Days To Germination: 7-14

Seeding Depth: 1/4”

Plant Spacing: 18-24”

Plant Height: 24-36”

Row Spacing: 24-36”

Growth Habit: Upright

Soil Type: Loamy, sandy, fertilized, well-drained

Temp Preference: 70-85 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Susceptible to bacterial spotting verticillium and fusarium wilt, and aphids. Watch for small pests or leaf hoppers.

Kale

Brassica oleracea var. acephala



Kale has recently become one of the most popular vegetables both in and out of the garden. Whether because of unparalleled health benefits, ease of growing, or showy decorative color, there is almost no reason not to have a place for kale in the garden. One of the hardiest Brassicas, boasting a tolerance to both heat and cold extremes. Kale is more diverse than you think, available in a variety of unique colors, shapes, sizes and textures.

Sowing And Growing:

Kale is a cool season hardy crop, for best results transplant 3-4 week old plants into the garden after final spring frost, or 6-8 weeks before the first fall frost. Plant 12-18" apart in nitrogen-rich, organic well-drained soil with a pH of 6.0-7.5. Kale benefits from fertilizer every 3-4 weeks. Extended summer heat will cause plants to bolt and become bitter.

Harvesting:

Most kale is ready to begin harvesting about 40 days after transplanting. Kale is a "cut and come again" crop and continuously harvesting younger, outer leaves will encourage growth. Carefully cut back any yellowing leaves that may appear at the base.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 55-75

Days To Germination: 3-10

Seeding Depth: 1/4"

Plant Spacing: 12-18"

Plant Height: 12-18"

Row Spacing: 24"

Growth Habit: Leafy upright

Soil Type: Nitrogen rich, loamy, well-drained

Temp Preference: 55-70 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: No serious diseases but monitor regularly for aphids, cabbage worms, and thrips.



Kohlrabi

Brassica oleracea var. gongylodes

A unique variety of Brassica which, like celeriac, is grown specifically for its wide and bulbous stem rather than its leafy greens or roots. Kohlrabi boasts all the same tolerances for disease and cold as broccoli, cabbage, and kale, and is believed to taste better after a few light frosts. Translated from German kohl (“cabbage”) and rabe (“turnip”), kohlrabi can truly best be described in both flavor and appearance as some turnip-like cabbage or cabbage-like turnip.

Sowing And Growing:

A cool season crop grown similarly to cabbage. For best results plant 3-4 week old transplants into the garden after last spring frost. Kohlrabi prefer organically rich, loamy, well-drained soils, with a pH of 6.0-7.5. Space plants 12-15” apart. A thin layer of top mulch helps retain moisture and cool roots during warm summer months.

Harvesting:

Due to the protective and toxic solanine produced by members of the nightshade family, avoid consuming eggplant before completely ripened. Most eggplant varieties are ready for harvest about 70-90 days after transplanting. Harvest fruits before wrinkling and going to seed. Carefully snip each eggplant from the branch with scissors or a garden knife while leaving 1” of the stem on the fruit.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 100-120

Days To Germination: 7-14

Seeding Depth: 1/4”

Plant Spacing: 18-24”

Plant Height: 24-36”

Row Spacing: 24-36”

Growth Habit: Upright

Soil Type: Loamy, sandy, fertilized, well-drained

Temp Preference: 70-85 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Susceptible to bacterial spotting verticillium and fusarium wilt, and aphids. Watch for small pests or leaf hoppers.

Lettuce

Lactuca sativa



Quick to maturity and easy to grow anywhere, countless varieties of lettuce have been specifically cultivated to thrive in the cold northern garden. Whether romaine, iceberg, butter, or leaf head, lettuce is available in savory redleaf or classic tender Greenleaf.

Sowing And Growing:

Lettuce is a cool weather crop, best when 4-6 week old starts are transplanted into the garden after the last spring frost. Lettuce is also a great fall crop, when planted 6-8 weeks prior to the first fall frost. Lettuce thrives in moist soils supplemented with nitrogen-rich fertilizer and can be planted every two weeks for successive, season-long harvests.

Harvesting:

Harvest lettuce once the leaves have reached 3-6" long. Be sure to pick the leaves once they're grown large enough, but before they reach maturity. Harvesting mature lettuce will result in bitter-tasting plants. Pick the outer leaves of the lettuce plant so the smaller leaves in the center will continue to establish. Other varieties of lettuce such as butterhead or romaine, can also be harvested by digging up the entire plant or cutting them while leaving an inch of the stem behind. You can store harvested lettuce in plastic bag in the fridge for 7-10 days.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 45-60

Days To Germination: 3-10

Seeding Depth: 1/4"

Plant Spacing: 9-12"

Plant Height: 6-12"

Row Spacing: 12-15"

Growth Habit: Leafy, mounding

Soil Type: Nitrogen-rich, composted, well-drained

Temp Preference: 60-70 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Susceptible to mildew, rot, and leaf spotting from soils if not properly drained and ventilated. Watch for aphids, whiteflies, and leafminers.

Melons

Cucumis melon



Melons come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes, and colors including the timeless cantaloupe, muskmelon, and honeydew. Regardless of variety, melons are full sun performers that thrive with a little trellis support and plenty of space to spread. Melons may not be as productive as tomatoes or cucumbers, but nothing will ever beat the flavor of a homegrown melon.

Sowing And Growing:

Melons are a full sun favorite, best if 4-6 week old starts are planted in sandy, composted, well drained garden soil. Plant on an 8-10" mounds to accommodate long trailing vines. Melons can also be trellised for tighter growing spaces. Melons require regular watering during fruiting and slight drought when ripening.

Harvesting:

Most varieties can be harvested 50-75 days after planting or when the fruit begins to show signs of ripening. Regardless of variety or color, all melons will emit a wildly sweet, fruity aroma and fall off the vine when ripe. Melons can also be snipped from the vine with about 1" of stem left attached to the fruit. Cantaloupe and muskmelon will turn evenly tan when ripe and honeydew should turn creamy yellow instead of green.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 80-100

Days To Germination: 4-10

Seeding Depth: 1"

Plant Spacing: 36-60"

Plant Height: 6-12"

Row Spacing: 36-60"

Growth Habit: Upright

Soil Type: Loamy, sandy, fertilized, well-drained

Temp Preference: 70-90 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Water soil directly at the roots to minimize mildew. Watch regularly for aphids, spider mites, and cucumber beetles.

Onions

Allium cepa



Onion is a cold hardy favorite. Long day onions are best suited for our growing area.

Sowing And Growing:

Onion is a cool hardy vegetable, bulbs can be planted 6-8 weeks prior to the final spring frost. 5-8 week old starter plants can be transplanted into the garden after final spring frost. Onions prefer well tilled, nitrogen-rich soil with a pH of 6.0-7.0. Onions should be planted 4-6" apart.

Harvesting:

Most onions are planted in the spring are ready for harvest in about 90 days. Onions are ready to harvest once the plants' greens have dried out, yellowed, and begun to bow over. Loosen the soil from the bulb to check for consistent coloring while allowing the bulb to further dry. Sweet onions do not store as well as more pungent yellow and brown varieties.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 90-110

Days To Germination: 4-10

Seeding Depth: 1/2"

Plant Spacing: 4-6"

Plant Height: 12-18"

Row Spacing: 18-24"

Growth Habit: Bulbous-rooted upright

Soil Type: Dandy, loose, composted, well-drained

Temp Preference: 55-75 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Watch for thrips and onion maggots. Susceptible to onion yellows virus which may stunt and infect nearby onions.

Pea

Pisum sativum



Peas have recently proven to be one of the most versatile and beneficial vegetables in the garden. Peas can be used for sprouting, microgreens and as cover crops. Whether English shelling, snow, or sugar snap, peas grow basically the same. Peas are also sown in the fall to replenish essential nitrogen back into depleted soils.

Sowing And Growing:

Pea is ideally suited for direct full sun and can be planted as soon as the soil can be worked after the last spring frost. Sow peas 1" deep and 1-2" apart in organically-rich, well-drained soil with a pH of 6-7.5. Pea seed can be soaked 4-6 hours in warm water prior to sowing to help germination. Thin peas to 6-8" apart.

Harvesting:

Most varieties of pea are ready for harvest 60-70 days from sowing. Know the variety you are planting because each will have different signs of ripeness. English shelling peas are the most traditional, having a fibrous, inedible shell and are the fastest to maturity. Sugar snap is the next to mature and has a fibrous but edible pod. Snow pea takes the longest to mature and has small seeds and flat, edible pods most notably used in Asian cuisine. Pea pods are sweetest when 3-3.5" long and should be carefully cut from vine rather than twisted or pulled.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 60-70

Days To Germination: 7-14

Seeding Depth: 1"

Plant Spacing: 6-9"

Plant Height: 12-36"

Row Spacing: 12-24"

Growth Habit: Upright

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 55-75 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Susceptible to mildew and mold from oversaturation in poorly drained beds.

Pepper

Capsicum annuum



Pepper is one of the most diverse, showy, and flavorful fruits grown in the garden. Available in nearly every possible color and shape from super sweet to super spicy, peppers grow stronger and taste better with a season of full sun and high heat. Peppers perform great in pots and containers.

Sowing And Growing:

Pepper is a heat-loving crop that does not perform well in shade or cold soils. It is best if 4-6 week old plants are transplanted into to the garden, 12-18 inches apart, or planting one plant per container. Pepper plants thrive in pots and containers with high quality potting mix, and will benefit from staking as they become top-heavy during fruit production.

Harvesting:

Some sweet and bell peppers can be harvested as soon as 60-70 days, but most hot varieties are ready about 100 days from planting or when skin has changed color. Know the individual variety you are sowing to know when color has reached ripeness. Peppers can be picked early to ripen indoors or left to ripen and change color on the vine. If working with hot peppers, wear gloves to avoid skin contact with capsaicin.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 70-100

Days To Germination: 7-14

Seeding Depth: 1/4"

Plant Spacing: 12-18"

Plant Height: 18-36"

Row Spacing: 18-24"

Growth Habit: Upright

Soil Type: Fertile organically-rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 70-85 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Susceptible to fungus, leaf spotting, and rot in poorly drained, oversaturated soils. Watch for aphids and whiteflies.

Pumpkin

Cucurbita



Pumpkin is a full-sun winter squash that thrives in the heat, trailing and vining just like a gourd or cucumber. Like any other winter squash, pumpkin have a wide variety of color and sizes for both ornamental and culinary use. Pumpkin are able to grow multiple fruits on the vine, but for the largest and most decorative squash, plants can be pruned to force enormous, even competition size pumpkins just in time for autumn fun.

Sowing And Growing:

Pumpkin can be sown directly into the garden after the final spring frost, but for the best start transplant 3-4 week old plants. Plant pumpkin on an 8-10" tall mound of soil every 5-6 feet to accommodate long, heavy trailing vines. Pumpkin prefer composted, well-drained soil with a pH of 6-6.8. Fertilize crop every 3 weeks and harvest pumpkins before fall frost. Once a few pumpkins begin to show on the vine, pinch off vines to inhibit vegetative growth, directing energy to producing the most optimal pumpkins.

Harvesting:

Most small to medium pumpkins are ready to harvest 90-100 days from sowing, while larger varieties require an extra few weeks. Regardless of color or size, pumpkins are generally ripe once the stem is solid and rind is tough, unable to be pierced by a fingernail. Clip pumpkins from the vine with shears leaving about 4" of stem intact and, once harvested, leave out to naturally cure in the sun for 10-14 days. The curing process will help pumpkins last up to 3 months longer after harvesting.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 60-70

Days To Germination: 7-14

Seeding Depth: 1"

Plant Spacing: 6-9"

Plant Height: 12-36"

Row Spacing: 12-24"

Growth Habit: Upright

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 55-75 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Susceptible to mildew and mold from oversaturation in poorly drained beds.

Spring Radish

Raphanus sativus



Spring radish is the smaller, shallow, and often pink or magenta variety that does not grow a deep taproot. Winter radish grows a broader, deeper root requiring 50-70 days until harvest, spring radish can be harvested as soon as 25 days and is one of the fastest maturing crops available.

Sowing And Growing:

Spring Radis is a cool season crop best sown directly into the garden 4-6 weeks before final spring frost. Plant 2-3 seeds $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep and 1-2" apart in very loose, organic, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.5-7. Seeds germinate in 3-7 days, thin out leaving the best starts 2-3" apart. Minimize nitrogen content when fertilizing to reduce small spindly roots and excessive greens. Radish will bolt to seed in excessive summer heat if not provided afternoon shade or sown late.

Harvesting:

Many varieties of spring radish are ready to harvest in less than a month from sowing. Using a gardening fork, harvest as roots begin to show 1-2" diameter above the soil. Sample one plant to determine if the rest of the crop is ready. Harvest radish promptly because roots will quickly spoil in the ground from heat and maturity. Some varieties of radish greens are edible and often used in pestos, salads and sautés.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 25-40

Days To Germination: 3-7

Seeding Depth: $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Plant Spacing: 2-3"

Plant Height: 6-8"

Row Spacing: 4-6"

Growth Habit: Bulbous rooted upright

Soil Type: Loose, light, fertilized, well-drained

Temp Preference: 50-70 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Monitor regularly for aphids.

Water soil directly to avoid saturating greens known to cause mildew

Winter Radish

Raphanus sativus



Winter radish is the larger, deeper, taproot variation of the smaller spring crop, growing very similar to the spring radish except needing a little extra time and space to mature. Daikon is widely considered the standard of winter radish. Winter radish is a frost tolerant cover crop specifically grown to repair and replenish poor and uncultivated soils.

Sowing And Growing:

Winter radish is a cool hardy staple best sown directly in the garden in mid-late summer. Plant 2-3 seeds ½" deep and 1-2" apart in very loose, organic, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.5-7.0. Seeds germinate in 3-7 days, thin out plants leaving the best starts 4-6" apart. Minimize nitrogen content when fertilizing reduce small spindly roots and excessive greens.

Harvesting:

Most varieties of winter radish are ready to harvest in about 60-70 days from sowing. Harvest when roots begin to show 1-2" diameter above the soil. Harvest radish promptly because roots will spoil in the ground from the first winter frost.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 60-70

Days To Germination: 3-7

Seeding Depth: 1/2"

Plant Spacing: 4-6"

Plant Height: 12-18"

Row Spacing: 12-18"

Growth Habit: Upright taproot

Soil Type: Loose, light fertilized, well-drained

Temp Preference: 55-75 °F

Light Preference: Full sun – part shade

Troubleshooting: Monitor regularly for aphids.

Water soil directly to avoid saturating greens known to cause mildew.

Rhubarb

Rheum x hybridum



Rhubarb like asparagus takes 3 years before a first harvest. However, once fully established, rhubarb will produce annually for the next 10-20 years as one of the most frost-hardy crops available. Similar to some berries and fruits, edible rhubarb stalks are sweeter and more ripe the deeper the color.

Sowing And Growing:

Rhubarb is a perennial winter hardy vegetable best if transplanted into the garden from well-established plants. Space plants 36-48" apart in a sunny, compost rich place in the garden.

Harvesting:

Like asparagus, rhubarb should not be harvested until its 3rd year but, once established, will produce annually for the net 10-20 years. Rhubarb produces thick, meaty celery-like stalks 9-18" long when ready to harvest. Stalks can be twisted from the base if ripe enough or carefully cut from the base with a knife as to not damage roots. Similar to strawberry, edible rhubarb stalks are sweeter, more flavorful the deeper red the color. Rhubarb greens are toxic to humans and small animals and should be composted after harvesting.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 3 years

Days To Germination: 7-21

Seeding Depth: 1"

Plant Spacing: 36-48"

Plant Height: 24-36"

Row Spacing: 4-5'

Growth Habit: Wide spreading upright

Soil Type: Loamy, sandy composted well-drained

Temp Preference: 55-75 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Watch for beetles, susceptible to crown rot in poorly drained soils.

Spinach

Spinacia oleracea



Spinach is one of the fastest, most tender, and delicious “cut and come again” varieties in the garden. A quickly maturing leafy vegetable, which can be sown in succession for longer harvest season. Spinach thrive from frequent harvesting and is known to vigorously regrow cut leaves in just days.

Sowing And Growing:

Spinach is a cool weather crop that is best planted from 4-6 week old starts after the final spring frost. Spinach prefers fertile, composted, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.5-7. Space plants every 6-12” in the garden. Avoid nitrogen-rich fertilizers known to spoil spinach flavor.

Harvesting:

Most varieties of spinach are ready to harvest 35-50 days from sowing. Spinach is one of the most productive and most popular “cut and com again” crops in the garden and takes only days for regrowth. Using scissors, simply snip larger outer leaves for harvest while allowing smaller leaves to continue vegetative growth. Harvest often to encourage production. Shoots that begin to bolt can be harvested to redirect plant energy from seed production to leafing.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 35-40

Days To Germination: 7-21

Seeding Depth: 1/2”

Plant Spacing: 2-4”

Plant Height: 6-12”

Row Spacing: 12”

Growth Habit: Leafy, upright

Soil Type: Fertile, organic, composted, well-drained

Temp Preference: 40-70 °F

Light Preference: Full sun – partial shade

Troubleshooting: Susceptible to fungus and mildew from oversaturation. Monitor regularly for aphids and leaf miners.

Summer Squash

Cucurbita pepo



Summer squash boasts one of the most productive, reliable, and fastest growing crops available in the summer. Whether zucchini, or crookneck, once these sun-loving squashes start fruiting, they'll continue producing non-stop all the way until frost. Summer squash thrives from frequent harvests and, if left unattended for even a day or two is notorious for spitting out unexpected 18-24" monsters when you weren't looking.

Sowing And Growing:

Summer squash is a full sun staple able to be sown directly after the final spring frost, but is best when 3-4 week old starts are transplanted into the garden. Plants should be planted on a 6-8" mound of soil to accommodate heavy vegetation. Plant 24-36" apart. Squash benefits from a top layer of mulch to help cool soil and roots. Fertilize after the first set of blooms appear and again during fruiting stage.

Harvesting:

Summer squash is one of the fastest, most productive crops in the garden and, with frequent harvests, will continue to produce all the way until frost. Most varieties are ready to harvest 50-60 days from sowing or ideally when 6-8" long. Summer squash will quickly reach a starchy and less flavorful 18-24" long if not harvested promptly.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 50-60

Days To Germination: 4-14

Seeding Depth: 1"

Plant Spacing: 24-36"

Plant Height: 36-48"

Row Spacing: 36-49"

Growth Habit: Leafy branching mound

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 60-83 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Monitor regularly for disease-carrying pests such as squash bugs, squash borers, and cucumber beetles.

Winter Squash

Cucurbita maxima



Winter squash grows one of the most fun, exciting, and durable fruits in the garden. Despite being called “winter” squash, these plants are grown in high heat and full sun just like summer squash. Winter squash features a timeless selection of exotic, decorative, and deliciously edible heirlooms such as butternut, acorn cushaw, and hubbard squash.

Sowing And Growing:

Winter squash is best if planted in full sun for starter plants that are 3-4 weeks old. Winter squash prefers medium moist, organic, well-drained soil. Plant on a 6-8” mound of soil to accommodate heavy trailing vegetation. Plants should be spaced 8-12’ apart depending on variety. Winter squash benefits from a top layer of mulch to help cool soil and roots. Fertilize after the first set of blooms appear and again during the fruiting stage.

Harvesting:

Most small to medium winter squash are ready to harvest about 80-100 days from planting while larger varieties require an extra few weeks. Regardless of color or size, winter squash are generally ripe once the stem is solid and rind is tough, unable to be pierced by a fingernail. Harvest leaving about 4” of the stem intact and, once harvested, leave out to naturally cure in the sun for 10 – 14 days. The curing process will help winter squash last up to 3 months longer after harvesting

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 80-120

Days To Germination: 4-14

Seeding Depth: 1”

Plant Spacing: 8-12’

Plant Height: 9-15”

Row Spacing: 72”

Growth Habit: Heavy-spreading mound

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 60-85 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Monitor regularly for disease-carrying pests such as squash bugs, squash borers, and cucumber beetles.

Tomato

Solanum lycopersicum



The quintessential staple of summer gardening and arguably offers the most seed diversity among all seasonal fruits. Available in every possible color, shape, and size. Tomatoes are a high-heat and full sun favorite that thrives in the garden, as well as in containers. Along with cucumber and summer squash, the tomato plant is one of the most productive, hardy, and heavy fruiting crops of the season.

Sowing And Growing:

Tomato is a warm weather crop best if 6-8 week old starts are planted in the garden after all possibility of frost has passed. Tomatoes prefer well drained soils with a pH of 6.0-6.8. Plants should be spaced 18-36" in the garden. Before planting know whether the plants are determinate or indeterminate, as each will have different growth habits. Determinate varieties mature to a pre determined size, producing all of its fruit at once with only minor need for staking. Indeterminate varieties grow indefinitely through the season, producing non-stop fruit while requiring heavy trellis support.

Harvesting:

Smaller varieties such as the cherry are ready to harvest at about 50 days after planting. Larger varieties like the beefsteak may require a few extra weeks. Although vine-ripened fruit is always preferred, tomatoes can just as easily be harvested early and ripen indoors by being stored in a paper bag or box along with a banana for its ethylene gas.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 80-110

Days To Germination: 5-14

Seeding Depth: 1/4"

Plant Spacing: 18-36"

Plant Height: 36-72"

Row Spacing: 24-36"

Growth Habit: Tall-reaching upright

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 65-85 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Susceptible to fusarium wilt, verticillium wilt, and blight. Watch for aphids, flea beetles, and tomato hornworms.

Watermelon

Citrullus lanatus



Watermelon is the unofficial herald of summer and, without doubt, the largest and juiciest fruit you can possibly hope for in the garden.

Sowing And Growing:

It is best to transplant 3-4 week old starter plants into the garden 6-8' apart. Watermelon prefer consistently moist, and well-drained soil with a pH of 6-6.8. Watermelon perform best when planted on an 8-10" mound of soil to accommodate long, heavy trailing vines. Watermelon is a heavy feeder and benefits from nitrogen-rich fertilizer every 3 weeks until fruiting, then minimize nitrogen content in fertilizer. Fruits contain 90% water and plants require heavy, routine watering to produce.

Harvesting:

Most watermelons are ready to harvest about 70 days after planting, or when showing signs of ripeness. The most important tip to picking vine-ripened watermelon is to locate the small tendril attached to the melon on the vine. If this tendril is completely brown and dead, the melon is ripe for harvest but, if the tendril is still even slightly green, the watermelon is not ready.

Hardiness Zone: Annual

Days To Maturity: 80-110

Days To Germination: 4-10

Seeding Depth: 1"

Plant Spacing: 6-8'

Plant Height: 9-15"

Row Spacing: 5-8'

Growth Habit: Heavy-trailing, mounded

Soil Type: Moist, organically rich, well-drained

Temp Preference: 65-95 °F

Light Preference: Full sun

Troubleshooting: Susceptible to wilt, mildew, and rot. Watch for cucumber beetles, aphids, and squash bugs.

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