

# Urban Farm Museum Society of Spryfield

## Vegetable Planting Times

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It's easy to get caught up in the "plant- everything-in-one-weekend" method of gardening. It's more sensible, however, to make several plantings of vegetables over several months.

Planting earlier...

- spreads out the work
- brings the first crop to harvest sooner
- allows for second crops in the same space
- meets the needs of cool-weather crops
- reduces insect damage.

And planting later...

- extend the harvest into autumn
- benefit cool-loving crops at summer's end.

### When to Plant

Seeds of certain vegetables can be planted as soon as the soil is dry enough to work in early spring.

You'll know the ground is dry enough to dig when the soil doesn't stick to your boots, or a ball of soil you make shatters when dropped from shoulder height. This could easily be late April or very early May, while there is still a risk of frost.

Indicator plants also tell us when to plant. If the soil is warm enough to make crocuses bloom, for example, then it is warm enough to germinate peas and lettuce seeds. Wait until apple trees bloom, however, before setting out transplants of tomatoes and melons.

### Season Extenders

Cold frames allow for both earlier and later planting. Any sturdy box that is one metre deep and one to two metres in length, with a sloping, south-facing, translucent or transparent lid can be used as a cold frame.

These mini-greenhouses protect plants from cooling winds, trap solar energy to raise the soil and air temperature.

For example, you could

- start an extra-early crop of lettuce, spinach and other greens in a cold frame in early April
- protect tomato transplants while there is still a risk of frost in May

- increase heat for heat-loving crops such as melons in the summer
- protect eggplants and peppers in autumn from the first frosts
- grow a very late crop of broccoli and salad greens into November.

Be sure to raise the lid a little bit on sunny days to ventilate the cold frame and prevent over-heating. Cold frames used inside small, light greenhouses in the garden will allow some crop production even in winter.

### How to Plant

Spread a 2.5 to 5 cm layer of compost or well-aged manure over the garden. Dig it into the soil 1 to 2 weeks before planting (or leave it on the surface if you practice no-dig gardening). Plant in rows, or in blocks with plants staggered in a grid system.

**Row planting** is best for plants that need staking, such as peas, or do not have much top growth and need regular weeding, such as garlic.

**Block planting** is good for leafy plants that make a weed-smothering canopy over the soil, such as carrots and cucumbers.

### Germination

Poor seed germination can be caused by old or improperly stored seeds, and by planting too deeply. Patchy or uneven germination is usually caused by uneven depth of planting.

Use a hoe handle to make a shallow, even trench. Cover seeds with soil to twice their diameter. Thus, large seeds such as peas will be planted deeper than tiny carrot seeds.

### Transplants

Harden off transplants by putting them outdoors for longer periods each day. Spread this out over 7 to 10 days. Transplant on a drizzly, calm day, or in the evening, rather than a sunny, breezy day. Water transplants each day for 1 week with a half cup of water around the roots of each transplant.

## Indoor Seeding Dates for Outdoor Transplants

No. Weeks to last frost*	Vegetable	Number of Weeks to Germinate	Germination Temperature
12 to 16	Asparagus	4 to 5	18° – 24° C
9 to 12	Leeks, Onions, Celery, Celeriac	2 to 3	10° – 20° C
8 to 10	Peppers, Eggplants	2 to 4	21° – 30° C
7 to 10	Chinese and Early Cabbage	1 to 3	7° – 27° C
6 to 8	Tomatoes	1 to 3	18° – 27° C
5 to 7	Broccoli, Cauliflower	1 to 3	10° – 27° C
5 to 7	Head Lettuce	1	2° – 21° C
4 to 6	Summer Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts	1 to 3	7° – 27° C
3 to 4	Melon, Watermelon	1	24° – 30° C
3 to 4	Witloof Chicory	1 to 2	15° – 21° C
2 to 3	Cucumber, Squash, Pumpkin, Zucchini, Summer Squash (optional - these can be direct-seeded)	1	21° – 27° C

\* Count backwards from the usual last frost date for your area.

## Early Spring Planting

As soon as the soil can be worked; crocus in bloom, tree buds swelling.

Vegetable	Seed	Transplant
Arugula	x	
Broad Beans (Fava)	x	
Chinese Cabbage	x	x
Corn Salad (Mache)	x	
Endive, Escarole, Kale	x	
Garlic	cloves	Also plant in fall
*Lettuce: Head	x	x
Lettuce: Looseleaf, Cos, Butterhead	x	
*Mustard Greens	x	
Onions, storage (plant sets or seeds)	x	
*Peas	x	x
*Radish	x	
*Spinach	x	

Turnips	x	
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\* *Make repeat sowings of greens every 2 – 4 weeks to May 31.*

## Mid Spring Planting I

Two weeks before last expected frost; daffodils and forsythia in bloom; tree buds showing green; leaves of some trees out.

Vegetable	Seed	Transplant
Asparagus	x	
Beets	x	Sow every 3 weeks to late summer
Broccoli, early crop	x	x
Cauliflower	x	
Kohlrabi	x	Sow every 3 weeks to late summer
Potatoes, early	sets	
Swiss chard	x	
Anything from Early Spring Planting that hasn't been planted yet.		

*N.B. Make repeat sowings of radishes and various greens to keep a supply of fresh salad makings on hand.*

## Mid Spring Planting II

One week before last expected frost; tree leaves showing.

Vegetable	Seed	Transplant
Beans, Runner, Shell	x	
Beans, Snap, Wax	x	Sow every 2 weeks to mid-July
Cabbage, Summer		x
Corn	x	Sow every week to 11 weeks before first frost
Leeks	x	x Main crop, transplants – main crop; late crop, seeds
Onions, storage		x
Onions, pickling	x	Sow every 3 weeks to summer
Witloof Chicory	x	
Anything from previous tables that hasn't been planted yet.		

*N.B. Cucumbers, Tomatoes, Summer Squashes and Zucchini can be set out now as transplants, provided they are protected by cold frames.*

## Early Summer Planting

Soil is warm; day temperatures warm and steady; night temperatures 10°C or warmer; apples, cherries and strawberries in bloom or just past bloom.

Vegetable	Seed	Transplant
Asparagus seedlings		x
Beans, Lima	x	
Broccoli, late crop	x	
Brussels Sprouts		x
Cabbage, winter storage	x	x
Carrots	x	
Celery, Celeriac		x
Cucumber (sow every 3 weeks to July)	x	x
Eggplant		x
Florence Fennel (sow after June 21)	x	
Melon, Watermelon		x
New Zealand Spinach	x	
Onions, Summer Bunching (sow every 3 weeks)	x	
Parsnips	x	
Peppers, sweet and hot		x
Potatoes, winter storage	sets	
Pumpkin	x	x
Salsify	x	
Scorzonera	x	
Squash, summer, Zucchini	x	x
Squash, winter	x	x
Sweet Potato		x
Tomatoes		x
Witloof Chicory		x

*N.B. Be prepared to cover transplants at night if a frost threatens. Use cold frames, or bed sheets supported above plants by stakes.*

## Mid-Summer Planting

Late June to early July.

Vegetable	Seed	Transplant
Beets	x	

Carrots	x	
Escarole, Endive	x	x
Kohlrabi	x	
Onions, Summer Bunching	x	
Peas, dwarf varieties	x	
Radicchio (Red Endive)	x	x
Rutabaga (Swede)	x	

## Late Summer Planting

Most of the following plants are tolerant of light frosts; those marked \* are very frost tolerant. Warm-season crops that continue to ripen will need protection from frosts. Count backwards from the usual first fall frost for the planting period. August 1-8 works well for many crops.

Vegetable	Seed	Before First Frost
Arugula *	x	up to 4 weeks
Beets, small and round, and leaf beets	x	up to 7 weeks
Chinese Cabbage	x	up to 10 weeks
Corn Salad (Mache) *	x	up to 4 weeks
Escarole, Endive	x	up to 10 weeks
Kale *	x	up to 5 weeks
Kohlrabi	x	up to 4 weeks
Lettuce, Leaf	x	up to 7 weeks
Butterhead, Cos, Romaine	x	up to 10 weeks
Mustard Greens	x	up to 7 weeks
Radish	x	up to 4 weeks
Winter Radish	x	up to 8 weeks
Spinach	x	up to 7 weeks
Swiss Chard *	x	up to 9 weeks
Turnip	x	up to 8 weeks

*N.B. Use cold frames to greatly extend the harvest.*

## Spacing of Vegetables

Vegetable	Space between plants x space between rows (centimetres)	Block
Arugula	10 x 23	15 x 15

Beans, Bush	5 x 45	15 x 15
Beans, Lima	8 x 45	18 x 18
Beans, Broad	11 x 45	23 x 23
Beans Runner	15 x 60	
Beets, pickling	2.5 x 30	
Beets, storage	8 x 20	
Broccoli	15 x 30	
Brussels Sprouts		90 x 90
Cabbage, Chinese	10 x 30	thin to 30 x 30
Cabbage, Winter		36 x 36
Cantaloupe, Melon		90 x 90
Carrots	4 x 15	8 x 8
Cauliflower		50 x 50
Celeriac, Celery		30 x 30
Corn	25 x 60	40 x 40
Corn Salad	5 x 20	10 x 10
Cucumber, Bush		90 x 90
Cucumber, Vine		120 x 120
Eggplant		40 x 40
Endive, Escarole		30 x 30
Garlic Cloves	10 x 15	
Kale		30 x 30
Kohlrabi	23 x 30	
Leeks	15 x 30	
Lettuce, Head	32 x 25	25 x 25
Lettuce, Butterhead	23 x 20	22 x 22
Lettuce, Leaf	2.5 x 13	
Mustard Greens		15 x 15
Onions, Bunching	2.5 x 23	
Onions, Storage	5 x 25	
Parsnip	8 x 20	13 x 13
Peas, Dwarf		11 x 11
Peas, Tall	5 x 13	
Peppers, Hot		38 x 38

Peppers, Sweet		45 x 45
Potatoes	25 x 75	
Pumpkin	120 x 180	150 x 150
Radicchio	32 x 25	
Radish	2.5 x 15	
Shallots	15 x 25	
Spinach	2.5 x 30	thin to 15 x 30
Squash, Winter		200 x 200
Swiss Chard	30 x 45	
Tomatoes, Bush		48 x 48
Tomatoes, Vine		90 x 90
Turnip	10 x 23	
Witloof Chicory	15 x 30	
Zucchini		90 x 90

**URBAN FARM MUSEUM SOCIETY**  
*Promoting rural traditions in urban places.*