

## WHEN TO PLANT

**When to Plant:** How early you can plant depends upon the hardiness of the vegetables and the climate in your area. Certain vegetables can withstand frost, while others cannot. Vegetables are classified as very hardy, frost-tolerant, tender, and warm-loving, according to their ability to withstand freezes, cold temperatures, or heat.

**Very Hardy** vegetables will withstand freezing temperatures and hard frosts without injury. They can be planted as soon as the ground can be prepared. Spinach and lettuce seeds may even be broadcast on late snows over soil prepared in fall.

**Frost Tolerant** (semi-hardy) vegetables can withstand light frosts. Their seeds germinate in cool soil temperatures, but not as readily as seed of the very hardy group. They can be planted as early as two or three weeks before the average date of the last freeze in the spring. The very hardy and frost-tolerant vegetables are known as “cool-season vegetables”. Their seeds germinate in cool soil, the plants withstand frost, and they grow best under the cooler weather of early spring and fall.

**Tender** (not cold-hardy) vegetables are injured or killed by frost, and their seeds do not germinate in cold soil. They are usually planted at the average frost-free date in the spring.

**Warm-loving** (heat-hardy) vegetables are intolerant of frost and cold and require warm soil temperatures for germination and wood growth. Most of these are tolerant of high summer temperatures and thrive when there is ample soil moisture. The tender and warm-loving vegetables are called ‘warm season vegetables’. (Our last average date of frost is between May 1<sup>ST</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup>.)

### Cool Season Vegetables for Early Spring Planting

### Very Hardy

(Plant 4-5 weeks before average frost-free date)

<u>Seed</u>	<u>Transplants</u>
Kale	Asparagus (crown)
Rutabaga	Onion (plant or set)
Kohlrabi	Broccoli
Salsify	Brussel sprouts
Parsley	Potato, Irish (tuber)
Leaf lettuce	Cabbage
Spinach	Rhubarb
Pea	Horseradish (root)
Turnip	
Onion	

### Frost-tolerant

(Plant 2-3 weeks before average frost-free date)

Beet	Mustard	Cauliflower
Carrot	Parsnip	Chinese cabbage
Chard	Radish	Herbs

### Warm-season Vegetables for Late Spring Planting

#### Tender

(Plant on average frost-free date)

Bean, snap  
 Corn, sweet  
 Tomato  
 Squash, summer  
 New Zealand spinach

#### Warm-loving

(Plant 1-2 weeks after average frost-free date)

Bean, lima	Eggplant
Cucumber	Pepper
Muskmelon	Potato, sweet
Okra	Watermelon
Pumpkin	Squash, winter

If you are one of those gardeners who likes to get an early start in planting your vegetable garden, here is a garden tip for you - soak your seed in warm water overnight. This hastens germination of those seeds that prefer warm soils - the tender and warm-loving vegetables. If we get a nipping frost after they are up, all you have lost is a little seed and a little time.

Our growing season is 150-180 days in length. Because in some years we have very warm weather early in the season, you may find that cool season crops such as spinach, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, etc., don't perform well. If the weather is too hot too early, these crops develop too quickly. The result is poorly formed heads of cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, and Brussel sprouts and the possible bolting (going to seed) of radishes, lettuce, and spinach. Be sure to plant these crops at the right time to make the most of the cool spring weather.

**A Good Vegetable Transplant Is:**

**Healthy** - This means in good nutritional condition and free of diseases, etc.

**Young** - about 4-8 weeks from seeding to time of transplanting into the garden is desirable.

**Medium-sized** - Usually 4-6 true leaves is ample. Larger transplants may produce a few days more quickly but usually don't produce as much by the end of the season.

**Stocky** - Grown at plant spacings of 6-9 square inches.

**Free of Flowers or Fruit** - Flowers can be removed before planting.