



## Vegetable Planting Summary

The primary purpose of this guide is to provide basic crop information including the best planting times for Sonoma County. See the Master Gardener publication [\*Growing Vegetables\*](#) for detailed information on planning, preparing and planting the garden. Master Gardeners also offer workshops on specific topics throughout the year and you can find a wealth of resources on the Master Gardener [website](#). Several excellent books are available from your library or bookstore.

### **KEY TO READING THIS GUIDE**

#### **COOL/WARM:**

**C** indicates cool weather crops. **C\*** indicates hardy vegetables that typically tolerate heavy frost (25° to 28°F) depending on microclimate and gardening practices. Many cool weather crops may be planted in early spring (to harvest in late spring/early summer) or in summer and early fall (to harvest in late fall/early spring). **W** indicates warm weather crops. **W+** indicates vegetables that can be planted earlier if special techniques are used to keep soil and plants warm early in season.

#### **PLANTING DATES:**

This is the approximate range of dates recommended for direct seeding and transplanting of each crop. Due to climate change, Sonoma County is expecting hotter days, more flooding and unpredictable weather events. We recommend paying close attention to weather forecasts in order to determine the best planting windows for your food crops. Once planted, consider using mulch, shade cloth and plastic sheeting over a frame to protect your crops from extreme weather. An asterisk (\*) in this column indicates that more information on planting dates is provided in the comments column.

#### **D/T**

**D** indicates crops that are usually planted by sowing seed directly into the garden.

**T** indicates crops that are usually transplanted; purchase seedlings when ready to plant or start seeds indoors 6 to 8 weeks before planting dates.

**D/T** vs. **T/D**. The first designation indicates the usual planting method--applicable when determining days to maturity.

#### **SPACING**

Recommended spacing between rows is given in inches for planting in traditional rows. If planting in raised beds or wide rows, leave the recommended space between all plants within the bed.

#### **DAYS TO MATURITY**

Use this guide as a rough indicator. The actual number of days between planting and harvesting depends on the crop variety and on the weather in your area. Fall vegetables may take much longer to mature since the fall and winter growing season is cool and days are shorter.

VEGETABLE	PLANTING DATE	COOL/WARM	D/T	SPACE IN ROW	SPACE BETWEEN ROWS	DAYS TO MATURITY	COMMENTS
<b>Artichokes</b>	May-Sept	C	T	24-48	72-90	130-190	Perennial. Harvest in spring; first harvest the year after planting. Taste and size deteriorate in warm weather.
<b>Asparagus</b>	Jan-Mar (crowns) Apr-June (seedlings)	C	T	12	60	2-4 years	Plant crowns January-March, seedlings April-June. Perennial. Requires good drainage; does not tolerate "wet feet." When planting crowns, dig trench at least 8-inches deep and 12-inches wide, fill bottom half with compost or aged manure, plant deep, fill trench as plants grow. Harvest 2 years from roots, 3 years from seedlings. Cut 5 to 8-inch spears just below the soil line, but do not damage the crown buds.
<b>Beans, bush</b>	May-July	W	D	2-4	30	48-70	For fresh eating, pick when young, before beans show through the pod. For drying, wait until pods have dried on the plant. Harvest period is typically shorter than for pole beans.
<b>Beans, pole</b>	May-July	W	D	2-4	30	48-70	Provide support such as trellis or pole at planting time. See Beans, bush for harvest information.
<b>Beets</b>	Mar-Aug	C*	D	3-5	6-12	55-70	Thin when young for baby beets. Continue harvesting as they reach desired size and to allow others to develop. Greens also are delicious.
<b>Broccoli</b>	Mar-Apr* July-Sept*	C	T/D	12-24	18	60-100	Seed March-April; transplant April-May. Seed July-August; transplant August-September. Harvest main head when firm, before head splits. Harvest side sprouts when tight buds form. Select shorter days to harvest varieties when planting in the spring.
<b>Brussels Sprouts</b>	July-Aug	C*	T/D	24	24	100-150	Pick 1 to 2-inch sprouts before leaves turn yellow. Overwinters well. Taste deteriorates in warm weather.
<b>Cabbage</b>	Mar-Apr* July-Aug*	C*	T/D	18-24	24	65-120	Seed March-April; transplant April-May. Seed July to mid-August; transplant August-September. Harvest when heads are firm, well filled. Cabbage becomes sweeter with frost exposure.
<b>Cabbage, Chinese</b>	July-Sept*	C	D	12-18	18	70-85	Seed July-August; transplant August-September. Harvest compact, firm heads before heavy frost arrives.
<b>Carrots</b>	Mar-Sept	C*	D	2	6-12	120-150	Grow in rich, loose soil; rocks and hard soil will misshape roots. Keep consistently damp until seeds sprout. In dry weather, cover seeds with damp burlap or row cover until sprouts appear. Harvest when roots are a good size (about 1-inch diameter) but still tender.

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<b>Cauliflower</b>	Mar-Apr* Aug-Sept*	C*	T/D	18-24	24	80-110	Seed March-April; transplant April-May. Seed July-August; transplant August-September. Tie up leaves to keep heads white. Does better in fall/winter. Harvest full-sized heads (5 to 6 inches) that are compact.
<b>Celeriac</b>	Apr-June	C*	T	6-8	12	150-180	Needs high fertility and water. Harvest 3-inch wide roots in fall and winter.
<b>Celery</b>	June-July	C	T	6-12	24	90-170	Needs high fertility and water. Harvest individual stalks or whole plant in fall and winter before stalks crack.
<b>Chicory and Radicchio</b>	Aug-Sept Apr-May*	C	D	12	18	80-90	Can be harvested as small leaf green 40 to 50 days after planting seeds. Tastes best in cool weather. Plant in spring only in cooler areas.
<b>Collard Greens</b>	Mar-Sept	C*	D	18-24	24-30	60-90	Harvesting outer leaves on the rosette encourages new leaf growth. Some prefer the tender leaves in the inner rosette. If harvested from the bottom up, a tree-like stem results. Leaves become sweeter with frost exposure.
<b>Corn Salad/Mâche</b>	Sept-Oct	C*	D	2	6-12	80	Cold tolerant. Overwinters well. Harvest desired sized leaves. Short shelf life--pick only the amount that is needed.
<b>Corn, sweet</b>	Apr-July	W	D	12	36	65-100	Wind-pollinated; plant in blocks at least 3 rows deep. For longer harvest, plant every 2 weeks through July, or plant different varieties with short, medium and long maturity dates. The new, very sweet corns germinate very poorly in cold, wet soil. "Super sweet" varieties should be isolated from other varieties that convert sugar more quickly to starch. Harvest about 3 weeks after silk appears, ideally the same day that it will be consumed.
<b>Cucumbers</b>	Apr-July	W+	D/T	12-24	48	50-75	Direct seed 6 seeds per hill; remove weakest plants leaving 3 per hill, or plant rows at recommended spacing. Can transplant starts but do not disturb roots. Need even watering to avoid bitterness. To prolong harvest, pick all cucumbers as they mature.
<b>Eggplant</b>	May	W+	T	18	36	60-80	Requires a lot of heat to fruit and mature, and even watering. Harvest eggplant as they mature, when some color develops and skin is glossy.
<b>Endive and Escarole</b>	Aug-Sept	C*	D	8-10	12	60-80	Does poorly in hot weather. Overwinters well. Endive may be blanched, or use unblanched leaves by harvesting outer leaves. Harvest Escarole when 5 to 6-inches tall; cut above soil line for re-growth.

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<b>Garlic</b>	Oct-Nov	C*	D	3-5	12-18	120-185	Requires good drainage. Plant large, unpeeled seed cloves. Harvest at end of June when plant tops begin to die. Withhold water one month before harvest.
<b>Greens, assorted</b>	Feb-Apr July-Oct	C	D	2-6	12-24	35-45	Includes arugula, Asian greens, cress, mustard, etc. Subject to bolting and attack by flea beetles in warm weather. Many are “cut-and-come-again” or may be harvested whole.
<b>Kale</b>	Mar-Nov	C*	D/T	12	18-24	65-75	Best taste in cool temperature. Can be cut when small (30 days) to use as salad green, or harvest larger outer leaves first. Becomes sweeter with frost exposure.
<b>Kohlrabi</b>	Mar-Apr Aug-Sept	C*	D/T	4-6	12	50-70	Harvest bulb when fist-sized or smaller (2 to 3-inches wide). Cut about 1 inch below the bulb.
<b>Leeks</b>	Feb-July	C*	T	2-4	18	120-150	Direct seed March-July. Start in containers February-March; transplant April-July. Harvest when stems are 0.5 to 2-inches wide.
<b>Lettuce</b>	Feb-Oct	C	D/T	4-12	12	40-90	Plant every 2 to 3 weeks for continual harvest. Use heat tolerant varieties in late spring and early summer. Cut leaves when 3 to 4-inches long, without harming crown; new leaves grow from the crown. Plants can be cut 3 or 4 times. Use closer spacing for “cut-and-come-again” harvesting or use wider spacing to allow for larger heads.
<b>Melons (Cantaloupe, Watermelon)</b>	May-June	W+	T/D	12	72	85-120	Plant 6 seeds in a circle about 10 inches in diameter per hill, then thin to 3 plants. Can also plant in rows at designated spacing. Need heat. Look for early varieties. Sweet fragrance may indicate ripeness.
<b>Okra</b>	Apr-June	W	T	12-18	36-48	70-80	Needs lots of heat and time. Harvest when pods are 2.5 to 3-inches long. Plants stop bearing if pods over-ripen on the stems.
<b>Onions, bulb</b>	Jan-May Aug-Sept	C	D/T	4-5	18	90-150	Seed into flats 10 to 12 weeks before transplanting. Overwintered onions may bolt in spring. Harvest after tops yellow and fall over--approximately 6 months after planting.
<b>Onions, bunching</b>	Mar-Oct	C*	D/T	1-2	12	50-80	Plant several times for continuous harvest. Harvest when tops are 12 to 18-inches tall.

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<b>Parsnips</b>	May-June	C*	D	3	12	90-120	Long growth period. Treat like carrots. Best flavor in cool weather. Harvest when mature before seed stalks develop.
<b>Peas</b>	Feb-Apr Aug-Oct	C	D	2-6	36	60-80	Includes shelling peas, edible pod peas and sugar snap peas. Tall varieties require support trellis. Protect seedlings from birds. Seeds rot in cold soil. Can transplant but do not disturb roots. Pick all peas as they mature to prolong harvest, ideally the same day they are consumed.
<b>Peppers</b>	Apr-June	W+	T	12-18	36	65-85	Require heat to fruit and mature. Harvest when green or wait for color. Hot peppers (except Jalapeño) usually are allowed to ripen/color fully.
<b>Potatoes</b>	Feb-Aug*	C	D	12	30	90-120	Plant small seed potatoes that are free of disease and have not been treated with sprout inhibitor. Do not use manure as fertilizer. As plants grow, mulch or add soil to cover potatoes; do not allow sun exposure. Usually planted in spring, but can plant every month from March to August for continuous harvest. Dig when tops die down.
<b>Potatoes, sweet</b>	Apr-May*	W	T	12	36	180-240	Require a lot of heat to produce good-sized roots. Not normally grown in Sonoma County. Plant "slips"--small, rooted pieces of potato--or "seed stock." Harvest when acceptable size, but before frost.
<b>Pumpkins</b>	Apr-July	W	D/T	36-96	72	100-120	Plant 6 seeds per hill in a circle about 10 inches in diameter, then thin to 3 plants. Or plant 36-inches apart for bush types; 36 to 96 inches for vine types. Harvest when shell is hardened leaving a 2-inch stem to prolong storage.
<b>Radishes</b>	Feb-Apr Sept-Oct	C*	D	1	6	20-60	Grow in loose soil. Sow seeds every 1 to 2 weeks in spring and fall for continual harvest. Harvest 3 to 6 weeks after seeding. For a winter harvest, sow in mid- to late fall as they do not store well in-ground.
<b>Radishes, Daikon and winter</b>	Aug-Sept	C*	D	4-8	8-12	50-70	Grow in deep, loose soil. Harvest when roots are 2 inches in diameter. Roots are brittle; use a digging fork to gently lift the roots.
<b>Rhubarb</b>	Dec-Mar	C	T	36	48	--	Perennial. Requires good drainage and plenty of summer water. Harvest after 1 year from roots, 3 years from seed. Pull individual petioles from the crown. Eat stalks only; leaves are POISONOUS!
<b>Rutabagas</b>	Aug	C	D	6	18-24	90	Direct seed. Best flavor in cool weather. Harvest when roots are 2 to 3 inches in diameter.

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<b>Spinach</b>	Feb-Mar July-Oct	C*	D/T	3-8	12	40-50	Bolts in warm weather. Harvest outer leaves, or cut whole plants above growing point for a second crop.
<b>Squash, summer</b>	Apr-July	W	D/T	24-48	48	50-60	Plant 6 seeds per hill in a circle about 10 inches in diameter, then thin to 3 plants. Or plant in rows at designated spacing. Harvest young for best flavor and to prolong harvest.
<b>Squash, winter</b>	May-June	W	D/T	24-60	72	80-120	Plant 6 seeds per hill in a circle about 10 inches in diameter, then thin to 3 plants. Or plant in rows at designated spacing. Harvest when shell has completely hardened, leaving a 2-inch stem to prolong storage.
<b>Swiss Chard</b>	Feb-Aug	C*	D	10-12	18-36	60-80	Can be transplanted or direct seeded. Cut outer leaves above growing point when plant is 12 to 18-inches tall. Inner leaves will continue to grow.
<b>Tomatillos</b>	Apr-June	W	T	18-24	40-48	70-80	Rangy plants need support like tomatoes. Will self-seed. Harvest when green fruit is 1 to 2-inches wide and papery shells turn brown.
<b>Tomatoes</b>	Apr-June	W+	T	18-36	36-60	50-90	Spacing depends on type (determinate or indeterminate) and support method. Requires a lot of heat to produce high yields, and even watering. Harvest when fruit is fully ripe and appropriate color for the variety.
<b>Turnips</b>	Feb-Mar Aug-Sept	C	D	2-6	12	30-75	Best flavor in cool weather. Harvest 2 to 3-inch roots when still tender. Tops are edible but don't harvest all of them while roots are growing.

For help with your garden problems, call the Master Gardener hotline at 565-2608 or visit the Master Gardener information desk in the University of California Cooperative Extension office (133 Aviation Blvd., #109, Santa Rosa), or ask a Master Gardener at your local farmers market or the Sonoma County Fair or other event. See our website at <http://ucanr.edu/sites/scmg/> for additional publications.

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