



Vegetable Planting Summary

The primary purpose of this guide is to provide the best planting times for Sonoma County. It also provides other basic information. Some knowledge of vegetable gardening is assumed. See the Master Gardener publication Growing Vegetables for information on planning, preparing, and planting the garden. If you need more information, a number of excellent books are available from your library or bookstore.

C indicates cool weather crop, W indicates warm weather crops. * next to C indicates hardy vegetables that can take temperatures below 20 deg F. Many cool weather crops may be planted in either early spring (to harvest in late spring and early summer) or in summer (to harvest in late fall to early spring). # next to W indicates vegetables that can be harvested earlier if special techniques are used to keep soil and plants warm early in the season.

✓ under direct seed column indicates that this crop is usually direct seeded. For crops that are usually transplanted, purchase seedlings when ready to plant or start seeds in flats 6 to 8 weeks before planting dates.

Space between plants and between rows is given in inches. Use "space between rows" if planting in traditional rows. If planting in raised beds or wide rows, leave "space between plants" between all plants within the bed.

"Recommended Dates" are the dates for direct seeding or transplanting. * in this column indicates that comments provide more information on planting dates.

"Days to Harvest" is only a rough indication. The actual number of days between planting and harvesting depends on the variety and on the weather in your area in that year. Vegetables planted in fall may take much longer to mature since the fall and winter growing season is so cool.

Vegetable	Cool/Warm	Recommended Dates	Direct Seed	Space between Plants in Row	Space between Rows	Days to Harvest (average)	Comments
Artichokes	C	May - Sep		24 - 48	72 - 90	130 - 190	Perennial. Harvest in spring (first harvest the year after planting). Taste and size deteriorate in warm weather.
Asparagus	C	*		12	60	-	Plant crowns Jan - Mar, seedlings Apr - Jun. Perennial. Requires good drainage; will not tolerate "wet feet". When planting bare root plants, dig deep trench (at least 8" deep and 12" wide), fill bottom half with compost or aged manure, plant deep, fill trench later. Harvest after 2 years from roots, 4 years from seeds.
Beans, bush	W	May - Jul	✓	6	30	55 - 65	Pick when young, before beans show through the pod. Do not pick when plants are wet from dew or from irrigating. Harvest period is shorter than for pole beans.
Beans, pole	W	May - Jul	✓	3 - 6	30	60-70	Require support, such as poles or trellis. Pick when young, before beans show through the pod. Do not pick when plants are wet from dew or from irrigating. Harvest period is longer than for bush beans.

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Beets	C	Mar - Aug	✓	2 - 5	6-12	55 - 70	Thin when young for baby beets. Continue harvesting as they reach desired size and allow others to develop. Greens can also be eaten.
Bok Choy	C	Feb - Mar Aug - Oct	✓	3 - 4	12 - 24	40 - 60	Can cut baby leaves in 30 days. Then thin to 12" between plants to grow to full size.
Broccoli	C	Mar - Apr* Jul - Sep		18	18	60-80	Seed March - April ; transplant April - May. Seed Jul to Aug, transplant Aug through Sep. Harvest side sprouts after harvesting main head.
Brussels sprouts	C*	Jul - Aug		24	24	100 - 150	Taste deteriorates in warm weather. Overwinters well.
Cabbage	C*	Mar - Apr* Jul - Aug		18	24	70-100	Seed March - April ; transplant April - May. Seed Jul to mid-Aug, transplant Aug to Sep.
Cardoon	C	May - Sep		20	36 - 48	180	Perennial. Edible leaf petioles must be blanched.
Carrots	C	Mar - Sep	✓	2	6 - 12	70 - 90	Grow in friable soil; rocks and hard soil will misshape roots. In dry weather, cover seeds with damp burlap or row cover until sprouts appear.
Cauliflower	C	Mar - Apr* Aug - Sep		18	24	80 - 90	Seed March - April ; transplant April - May. Seed Jul to Aug, transplant Aug to Sep. Tie up leaves or cover heads to keep heads white. Does better in fall-winter.
Celeriac	C	Apr - Jun	✓	6-8	12	150 - 160	Needs high fertility and water. Harvest roots in fall and winter.
Celery	C	Jun - Jul		12	24	120 - 170	Needs high fertility and water. Harvest stems in fall and winter.
Chicory & Radicchio	C	Aug - Sep Apr - May*	✓	12	18	80 - 90	Can be harvested as small leaf green 40 to 50 days after planting seeds. Tastes best in cold weather. Plant in spring only in the cooler areas of Sonoma County.
Chinese Cabbage	C	Aug - Sep*	✓	12 - 18	18	70 - 85	Seed Jul to through Aug,, transplant Aug through Sep.
Corn Salad/Mache	C*	Sep - Oct		2	6 - 12	80	Cold tolerant. Over-winters well.
Corn, sweet	W	Apr - Jul*	✓	12	36	65 - 110	Wind pollinated; plant in blocks at least 3 rows deep. For longer harvest, plant every 2 weeks from May through July, or plant different varieties with short, medium, and long maturity dates. All of the new very sweet corns germinate very poorly in cold, wet soil. "Super sweet" (hybrid "sh2") varieties should be isolated from other varieties.

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Cucumbers	W#	Apr - early July	✓	24	48	50 - 70	Direct seed 6 seeds per hill; remove weakest plants leaving 3 per hill, or plant in 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.
Eggplant	W#	May		18	36	70 - 80	Require a lot of heat to fruit and mature.
Endive & Escarole	C	Aug - Sep	✓	8 - 10	12	60-80	Does poorly in hot weather. Over-winters well.
Garlic	C*	Oct - Nov	✓	3	12 - 18	120 - 185	Requires good drainage. Plant large, clean seed cloves. Harvest at end of June. Withhold water one month before harvest.
Greens, assorted	C	Feb - Apr Jul- Oct	✓	2 - 6	12 - 24	35 - 45	Includes mustard, arugala, mizuna, tatsoi, pak choy, etc. Subject to attack by flea beetles in warm weather.
Kale	C*	Mar - Nov	✓	12	18	65 - 75	Best taste in cool temperatures. Can be cut when small (30 days) to use as salad green.
Kohlrabi	C	Mar - Apr Aug - Sep	✓	3	12	60 - 70	Harvest when fist size or smaller.
Leeks	C*	Feb - Jul		4	18	120 - 150	Direct seed Mar - Jul. Start in containers Feb - Apr, transplant Apr - Jul.
Lettuce	C	Feb - Oct*	✓	2 - 12	12	50 - 60	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" long, without harming the crown of the plant; new leaves will grow from the crown. Plants can be cut 3 or 4 times. Use closer spacing for such "cut-and-come-again" harvesting, wider spacing to allow for larger heads.
Melons (Cantaloupe, Watermelon)	W#	May - Jun	✓	12	72	85 - 120	Can plant several to a hill; plant 6 seeds in a circle about 10" in diameter, then thin to 3 plants. Make hills in square pattern 6' to 10' apart. Can also plant in rows at designated spacing. Need heat. Look for early varieties.
Okra	W	Apr 15 - Jun		12	36 - 48	70 - 80	Harvest when pods 3" to 4" long. Needs lots of heat and time.
Onions, bulb	C	Jan - May Aug - Sep		3	18	100 - 120	Seed into flats 10 to 12 weeks before transplanting. Over-wintered onions may bolt in spring.
Onions, bunching	C*	Mar - Oct	✓	1 - 2	12	70 - 80	Plant several times for continual harvest.

For additional advice, call the Master Gardener Information Desk, 565-2608.

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Parsnips	C*	May - Jun	✓	3	12	90-120	Treat like carrots. Best flavor in cool weather.
Peas	C	Jan - Apr Aug - Oct	✓	2 - 4	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.
Peppers	W#	Apr 15 - Jun 15		12 - 18	36	65 - 85	Require heat to fruit and mature. Respond well to high nitrogen fertility.
Potatoes	C	Feb - May*		12	30	100 - 120	Plant small seed potatoes that are free of disease and have not been treated with a sprout inhibitor. Do not use manure as fertilizer. As plants grow, mulch or add soil to cover potatoes. Usually planted in spring, but can plant every month from mid-March until mid-August for continuous harvest.
Potatoes, sweet	C	Apr 15 - May 15*		12	36	180 - 240	Require a lot of heat to produce good sized roots. Not normally grown in Sonoma County.
Pumpkins	C	Apr 15 - Jul 15	✓	48	72	100 - 115	Can plant several to a hill; plant 6 seeds in a circle about 10" in diameter, then thin to 3 plants. Make hills in square pattern 6' to 10' apart. Or can plant in rows at designated spacing.
Radishes	C*	Feb - Apr Sep - Oct	✓	1	6	20 - 60	Grow in friable soil. Sow seeds every 1 to 2 weeks in late winter and early fall for continual harvest.
Radishes, Daikon & Winter	C*	Aug - Sep	✓	4 - 8	8 - 12	50 - 70	Grow in deep, friable soil.
Rhubarb	C	Dec - Mar		36	48	-	Perennial. Requires good drainage and plenty of summer water. Harvest after 1 year from roots, 3 years from seed.
Rutabagas	C	Aug	✓	6	18 - 24	90	Direct seed. Best flavor in cool weather.
Spinach	C*	Feb - Mar Jul - Oct	✓	4 - 8	12	40 - 50	Bolts in warm weather
Squash, summer	W	Apr - Jul	✓	12 - 24	48	50 - 60	Can plant several to a hill; plant 6 seeds in a circle about 10" in diameter, then thin to 3 plants. Make hills in square pattern 6' to 10' apart. Or can plant in rows at designated spacing. Harvest young to prolong harvest and get most taste.

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Squash, winter	C	May - Jun 15	✓	24 - 48	72	80 - 120	Can plant several to a hill; plant 6 seeds in a circle about 10" in diameter, then thin to 3 plants. Make hills in square pattern 6' to 10' apart. Or can plant in rows at designated spacing.
Swiss chard	C	Feb - Aug	✓	10	18 - 36	60 - 80	Can be transplanted or direct seeded.
Tomatillos	W	Apr 15 - June		12 - 36	40 - 48	70 - 80	Rangy plants benefit from short supports. Will self-seed.
Tomatoes	W#	Apr 15 - Jun 15		18 - 24	36 - 60	50-90	Spacing depends on type (determinate or indeterminate) and support method. Require a lot of heat to produce high yields.
Turnips	C	Feb - Mar Aug - Sep	✓	2	12	30 - 55	Best flavor in cool weather.

To Master Gardeners: Please contact Marge Tobias to make additions or corrections to this summary. Thanks!

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