

Basic Seed Starting Guide

Outdoors (Direct Seed)

Be sure you are planting your seeds at the right time of year as soil temperature affects germination and growth. This information is usually listed on the back of a seed packet or readily available online. Prepare your soil by adding some compost and loosening with your preferred tool (tiller, fork, shovel). Plant seeds directly in the ground at the appropriate depth. Keep soil moist until seeds sprout.

Indoors (Transplants)

Use a seed-starting potting soil in containers that drain through the bottom. You can purchase seed starting trays or get creative and repurpose egg cartons, Dixie cups, toilet paper rolls, newspapers, etc. Plant seeds at the appropriate depth. Keep moist until seeds sprout; this can be done either by 1) watering daily or 2) watering at the time of seeding, covering with thin plastic to hold moisture in, and removing the plastic right after the seeds sprout. Once the seeds sprout, move them to a sunny window. Water daily to keep the soil from drying out. If you plan to move them outside, start indoors about 4 to 6 weeks before you intend to move them out.

Easy-to-Grow Vegetables

Bush Beans: Full to Part Sun; May be grown in containers at least 7" deep. Plant 2" deep in June or July. ~55 days to harvest.

Spacing: 4-6", all directions.

Harvesting: 1-2x per week will keep productivity up and lengthen life of the plant.



Beets: Full Sun; May be grown in containers at least 10" deep. Plant ½" deep in April thru August. ~60 days to harvest.

Spacing: Thin to 3" apart in the row; rows 12" apart.

Harvesting: Pick beets as you are ready to eat them. They will be ok if left in the ground for a while. Preferably pick them within a month of reaching mature size.



Leaf Lettuce: Full Sun to Part Shade; May be grown in containers. Plant ¼" deep in Spring or Late Summer (does not do well in summer heat). ~45 days to harvest.

Spacing: 8", all directions.

Harvesting: Cutting just the outer leaves will allow the plant to continue to grow and provide several harvests.



Tomatoes: Full Sun; Not ideal for containers, but can be grown in 5-gallon buckets. Start inside in early April (optional). Transplant or direct seed ½" deep in Mid-May, after danger of frost. ~100 days to harvest from seed.

Spacing: 2-3' within a row; rows 3' or more apart.

Harvesting: Harvest regularly to keep production up. Allowing vegetables to rot on the plant shortens the plants lifespan.

To trellis or not to trellis?

You'll often see tomatoes supported by tomato cages or some other form of trellising. Providing support for your tomato plants will increase productivity and the lifespan of the plant. However, it is not entirely necessary. A tomato with no support can still grow along the ground and produce tomatoes.

Looking for more information on growing vegetables? Check out Frank Tozer's *The New Vegetable Growers Handbook: A users manual for the organic vegetable garden.*

