

Garden Guide for Container and Small Vegetable Gardens

Vegetable/Fruit (Suggested Varieties)	Seasonal Planting Instructions (Dates are based on Central Maryland)		Basic Care of Plants					
	Spring	Fall	Seed Planting Depth	Plant Spacing Outside in Garden	Container Size	Days to Germinate	Days to Harvest	Harvest Guide
FLOWERS								
Broccoli	<p>Start seeds indoors in late February - mid-March.</p> <p>Harden off seedlings before planting them in the garden by gradually exposing the plants to the outdoors for about a week.</p> <p>Plant transplants outdoors in late April - May.</p>	<p>Plant seeds or transplants in early August.</p> <p>Protect from heat and late summer pests with a floating row cover.</p>	1/4 inch	15-18 inches	16 inches deep	3-5	55-70	A head that is made of tight green buds will form and can be cut from the plant using a serrated knife. Smaller side crowns will continue to form and can be harvested as they appear.
Cauliflower	<p>Start seeds indoors in late February - mid-March.</p> <p>Harden off seedlings before planting them in the garden by gradually exposing the plants to the outdoors for about a week.</p> <p>Plant transplants outdoors in late April - May.</p> <p>When the head is 2 to 3 inches in diameter, cover with a floating row cover to protect from sunlight and pests.</p>	<p>Plant seeds or transplants in early August.</p> <p>Protect from heat and late summer pests with a floating row cover.</p> <p>Do not plant overly mature transplants. They will produce "button heads."</p>	1/4 inch	15-18 inches	16 inches deep	8-10	50-80 days from transplanting.	<p>A head that is made of tight green buds will form and can be cut from the plant using a serrated knife. Smaller side crowns will continue to form and can be harvested as they appear.</p> <p>Cut before flower sections begin to separate. The head should be compact, firm, white, and fairly smooth. Leave a ruff of leaves surrounding the head when harvesting. Cauliflower heads become grainy when overly mature.</p>

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FRUIT VEGETABLES								
Cucumbers (Salad Bush, Burpee Hybrid II, Bush Crop, Spacemaster, Burpee Pickler, Bush Champion, Fanfare, Pickalot, Picklebush, Pot Luck, Mexican Sour Gherkin, Parke's Better Bush, Patio Pickles)	Start seeds indoors in early April. Harden off seedlings before planting them in the garden by gradually exposing the plants to the outdoors for about a week. Plant transplants outdoors in early May.	Plant transplants outdoors between June 15 – July 20.	1 inch	12-24 inches	4-5 gallon container per plant	3-8	50-60	Harvest regularly, so the plant will continue to produce. Remove the cucumber close to the stem.
Pumpkin	Sow seeds directly in the garden late April – May. Plant in mid-June if trying to harvest closer to Halloween.	Cannot be planted in the fall.	1 inch	6 seeds in 2 foot diameter mound; thin to 2 plants; space mounds 3 feet apart	-----	7-10	90-120	The fruit will have a deep color and will make a hollow sound when thumped. Use pruners or scissors to cut the fruit from the rest of the plant.
Summer Squash (3 main types: -yellow straightneck, yellow crooked neck -white, saucer-shaped, scallop, patty pan -oblong, green, gray, or gold zucchini)	Sow seeds directly in the garden 2-3 seeds every 2 to 3 ft in the row in late May-early June. Seeds can also be started indoors in late April - May.	Plant outdoors July 1-15.	1 inch	24-36 inches	4-5 gallon container per plant	3-8	50-65	Harvest when still immature, only about 6-8 inches long and 1 1/2 to 2 inches in diameter for elongated types; 3 to 4 inches in diameter for patty pan types; 4 to 7 inches long yellow crooked neck. If the rind is too hard to be marked by a thumbnail, it is over-mature. Remove old fruit to allow new fruit to develop new fruit.

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FRUIT VEGETABLES								
Sweet Peppers (Bell, Banana, Sweet Cherry, Pimiento)	Start seeds indoors in February - March. Set out transplants after soil has thoroughly warmed in spring, or late May.	Not recommended for fall planting.	1/4-1/2 inch	2 feet	3-5 gallon	7-10	70-85	Harvest when they reach full size. When allowed to mature on the plant, most varieties turn red, yellow, purple, orange, or brown, and are sweeter. Cut pods, rather than pulling, to avoid breaking branches.
Tomatoes *For containers, choose patio or hanging basket cultivars (Celebrity, Patio Pixie, Sweet Chelsea, Tiny Tim, Totem, Tumbling Tom, Small Fry VFN, Yellow Pear, Sweet 100, Container Choice, Yellow Canary, Whippersnapper, Basket Pak, Gardener's Delight, Sundrop)	Start seeds indoors in mid-to-late March. Harden off seedlings before planting them in the garden by gradually exposing the plants to the outdoors for about a week. Plant transplants outdoors in early May to June 15.	Plant transplants outdoors June 15 - July 5.	1/4-1/2 inch	30 inches	Dwarf: 2 gallon container Standard: 4-5 gallon container per plant	6-14	65-90	Pick individual fruit from the plant when the fruit begins to color and ripen them indoors (this will greatly reduce pest, disease, and cracking problems).
Watermelon (Belle 460, Diana, Gold Flower, Wonder, Boston, Golden Honey, Poquito, White Wonder)	Sow seeds directly in the garden late April - early May. Seeds can be started indoors 3-4 weeks prior to planting outdoors.	Cannot be planted in the fall.	1 inch	2 feet	5 gallon	4-10	80-100	Fruit is ripe if it is thumped and produces a hollow, dull sound. Cut the fruit away from the plant using pruners or scissors.

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FRUIT VEGETABLES								
Winter Squash (Bush Delicata, Bush Acorn, Butterbush, Table King, Cream of the Crop)	Plant seeds or transplants out- doors from May 15 - June 15.	Cannot be fall planted.	1 inch	24-36 inches	4-5 gallon container per plant	4-10	80-120	Cut individual fruits from the plant with pruners or a sharp knife.
LEAF VEGETABLES								
Arugula	Sow seeds directly in the garden late March - April.	Sow seeds directly in the garden August - September.	1 inch	3-4 inches	3-6 inches deep	4-10	30-50	Cut leaves to one inch. Leaves will grow back for another cutting.
Brussel Sprouts	Sow seeds directly in the garden in April.	Sow seeds directly in the garden in July.	1/4-1/2 inch	14-24 inch	12 inches wide, 12 inches deep	5-10	80-100	Pick or cut the sprouts from the stem when they are about 1-2 inches in diameter.
Cabbage (Baby Head, Dwarf Morden, Minicole, Fast Ball, Flash)	Start seeds indoors between late February - March. Harden off seedlings before planting them in the garden by gradually exposing the plants to the outdoors for about a week. Plant transplants outdoors March 15-April 15.	Plant transplants outdoors July 10 - August 20.	¼ inch	18 inches	8-10 inches wide, 12 inches deep	4-10	60-100	A head of cabbage should be at least soft- ball-sized and firm. To harvest, cut the head from the stem and discard outer leaves.
Chinese Cabbage – (Jade Pagoda, Joi Choi, Me Qing Choi)	Sow seeds directly in the garden between March 15 – April 15.	Sow seeds di- rectly in the gar- den in August - September.	1/4-1/2 inch	4-8 inches	8-12 inches deep	4-7	30-50	Cut whole head at soil level when they are compact and firm. Can be harvested at any stage in growth.

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LEAF VEGETABLES								
Collard Greens	Plant outdoors between April 1 - June 1.	Plant outdoors between July 10 - August 10.	1/2 inch	6 inches	12 inches deep	5-10	40	When leaves are about 10 inches long, cut the individual leaves to harvest.
Kale	Plant transplants outdoors between April 1 - April 20.	Plant transplants outdoors between July 10 - August 10.	1/2 inch	12-18 inches	8 inches wide, 8 inches deep	5-10	50-60 Baby greens: 25-30	When leaves are at least 3 inches long, harvest individual leaves. To harvest the entire plant, cut about 2 inches above the soil.
Leaf Lettuce	Plant seeds indoors in March. Harden off seedlings before planting them in the garden by gradually exposing the plants to the outdoors for about a week Plant transplants outdoors between April 15 - May 15. Protect plants from heat in the summer with a floating row cover.	Sow seeds directly in the garden between July 15 - August. Protect plants from heat with a floating row cover.	1/4 inch	10-12 inches	3-6 inches deep	4-10	45-70 Baby lettuce: 20-30	Leaves can be cut with scissors about 2 inches above the soil. Leaves will grow back for a second harvest.
Mustard Greens	Sow seeds directly in the garden from April 1 - April 15.	Sow seeds directly in the garden from August 1-August 15.	1/3 - 1/2 inch	3-5 inches	3-6 inches deep	5-10	45 Baby greens: 20-25	Harvest individual leaves or the entire plant when the leaves are young and tender by cutting just above the soil.

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LEAF VEGETABLES								
Spinach	Sow seeds directly in the garden from March 10 - April 20.	Sow seeds directly in the garden from August 1 - September 15.	1/4 inches	4 inches	4-6 inches deep	6-14	28-45	Individual leaves can be picked or cut when they are full-sized. Or cut all leaves to one inch, leaving the crown to re-grow.
Swiss Chard	Sow seeds directly in the garden from April 15 - June 15.	Sow seeds directly in the garden from June 15 - July 25.	1 inch	8-12 inches	1-2 gallons per plant	4-14	45-55	Harvest when leaves are about 6 inches tall by cutting leaves just above soil-level.
Turnip Greens - See Root Vegetables								
ROOT VEGETABLES								
Beets (Baby Canning, Spinel Little Ball, Red Ace Hybrid, Burpee Golden)	Sow seeds directly in the garden in April.	Sow seeds directly in the ground from June 20 - August 1.	1/2 inch	2-4 inches	6-12 inches deep	7-10	50-75	Harvest when the top of the beet root (shoulders) is 1-2 inches in diameter and just above the soil line. To harvest, gently pull on the base of the stem, just above the root.
Carrots (Little Finger, Napoli, Short n Sweet, Thumbelina, Nantes, Gold Nugget, Best of the Bunch, Baby Spike)	Sow seeds directly in the garden from April 10 – May 10. Continue planting every 3-4 weeks to stagger harvest throughout the growing season.	Plant seeds from June 15-July 15. Protect from extreme heat with floating row cover.	1/2 inch	½ inch	10 inches wide, 10 inches deep	10-17	50-70	Look for the top of the root (shoulders) to show above the soil and gently pull at the base of the stem to harvest.

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ROOT VEGETABLES								
Radishes (Cherry Belle, Early Scarlet, French Breakfast, Sparkler, Burpee White, Comet)	Sow seeds directly in the garden from March 20 - May 10.	Sow seeds directly in the garden from July 20 -September 15.	1/4 inch	1-2 inches	4-6 inches deep	3-10	18-45 for spring 45-70 for fall	Harvest when the root is just showing above the ground, and about the diameter of a quarter. Gently pull above the root to harvest.
Sweet Potatoes (bush varieties for containers)	Plant vines when night temperatures are above 60° (June) in well-drained soil. Mix in compost with soil for good drainage.	Cannot be planted in the fall.	2 inches	12 inches	3-10 gallon (cloth, wood, or clay for best results)	10-15	85-110	Harvest in September or October, just before the first frost or when tips of vines begin to turn yellow. Gently dig up tubers.
Turnips (Desired varieties for roots: Purple Top White Globe, Hakurei, Scarlet Queen Red Stems; Desired varieties for greens: Alltop, Seven Top, Shogoin, Topper)	Sow seeds directly in the garden from March 20 - May 1.	Sow seeds directly in the garden from July 10 – September 1.	1/2 inch	2-4 inches	10-12 inches deep	3-10	21 days for greens 40-60 days for roots	Harvest leaves when they are 4-6 inches tall. Harvest roots when roots appear just above the surface and are 2-3 inches in diameter, by gently pulling above the root.

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SEEDS								
Corn (For small gardens, look for space saving varieties, such as: F-M Cross, Golden Bantam, Kandy Korn, Precocious)	Sow seeds directly in the garden from May 1 - June 15.	Sow seeds directly in the garden from June 15 - July 10.	1 1/2 – 2 inches	6- 8 inches	21 inches wide, 12-24 inches deep. Plant 3 plants per container to ensure pollination.	3-10	50-100	Look for ears that are completely filled with kernels. A milky white liquid should come out when a kernel is pierced. To harvest, cut each ear of corn from the stalk.
Peas (Little Marvel, Sugar Bon, Sugar Mel, Laxton's Progress, Sugar Rae, Melting Sugar, Burpees Blue Bantam, Early Patio Snowbird)	Sow seeds directly in the garden from March 15 - May 1.	Not recommended to grow in the fall.	1 inch	2-3 inches	12 inches deep	6-15	60-80	Peas are ripe when the pods are enlarged and the seeds are almost full size. To harvest, remove the pods from the plant with scissors.
Beans (Bush type: Masai, Maxibel, Tavera, Blue Lake Bush) (Pole type: Kentucky Blue, Kentucky Wonder, Pole Romano) (Lima: Bush Baby, Fordhook Bush Lima, Fordhook 242)	Sow bush and pole type beans directly in the garden between May 5 - June 30. Sow lima beans directly in the garden between May 10 – June 10.	Sow bush and pole type beans directly in the garden between July 1 - August 5. Sow bush and pole type beans directly in the garden between June 20 - July 10.	1 inch	2-3 Inches	8 inches wide, 10 inches deep For lima beans: 12 inches wide, 10 inches deep	4 - 10	55 -65	When the beans are 3 to 4 inches long and crisp, they are ripe. To harvest, pick individual beans from the plant, leaving the stem on the plant.

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STEM VEGETABLES								
Celery	Plant seeds indoors in February. Harden off seedlings before planting them in the garden by gradually exposing the plants to the outdoors for about a week. Plant transplants outdoors from April 15-May 15. Mix in compost and keep soil moist at all times.	Plant transplants outdoors from June 1 – July 20.	1/8-1/2 inch inch deep	12-18 inches apart	8inches deep	10-14 days	Up to 140 days	Cut stalks as desired, or harvest the whole plant and cut off roots when 8-12 inches tall.

Gardening Notes:

- **Hardening off new seedlings:** Is a process in which plants that were grown indoors from seeds are prepared for planting outdoors. When there is no threat of frost, seedlings can be gradually exposed to the outdoors over the period of about a week. Begin by placing plants outdoors during the day and bringing them in for the first few nights. Gradually increase the amount of exposure to sun and wind and leave them outdoors by the end of the week.
- **Transplanting:** Is the process of planting seedlings from a small container to a garden bed or larger garden container. To transplant a seedling, dig a hole bigger than the size of the root ball, gently slide the plant out of the pot, making sure to hold the plant by the root ball and not the stem. Finally, place the plant in the hole and fill in with a mixture of soil and compost.
- **Thinning:** Is the process of removing extra seedlings to make sure that plants have enough room to grow. This is done after the seeds have been planted and sprouted.

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Adapted from:

1. HG-16 "Planting Dates for Vegetable Crops in MD", written by Jon Traunfeld, University of Maryland Extension Specialist, Fruits and Vegetables - http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/_images/programs/hgic/Publications/HG16%20Planting%20Dates%20for%20Vegetable%20Crops%20in%20Maryland.pdf
2. HG - 70 "Recommended Vegetable Cultivars for Maryland Home Gardens", written by Jon Traunfeld, University of Maryland Extension Specialist, Fruits and Vegetables - http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/_images/programs/hgic/Publications/HG70_Recommended_Vegetable_Cultivars.pdf
3. GE-133 "20 Recommended Vegetable Crops for School Container Gardens: Classification and Characteristics", written by Jon Traunfeld, University of Maryland Extension Specialist, Fruits and Vegetables - http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/_images/programs/hgic/Publications/not_updated/GE133%20Crop%20Matrix.pdf

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