
SEED STARTING

Some vegetables must be started as transplants to get a long enough growing season. Most others can be started outdoors. Gardeners who routinely use transplants usually have better production, because they get faster successions. For more information about growing your own transplants get Community Horticulture Fact Sheet # 7 "Transplants" and # 8 "Starting Garden Crops."

If you choose to direct seed in the garden, you must provide the seeds the conditions they need to germinate and grow well. Here are some tips:

1. Prepare a good seedbed by digging and breaking up soil clods.

Smaller seeds (carrots, lettuce, radishes) need a "finer" soil to sprout and push roots into. Remove rocks, sticks and plant debris. Larger seeds (beans, corn, peas) can take rougher soil.

2. Plant seeds only 2 to 5 times as deep as they are wide

 (for flat seeds, use smallest width). Plant seeds deeper (5 times width) in dry or warm weather, shallower (2 times width) in cold, wet weather.

3. Keep seeds moist.

 Water small seeds with fine spray, so soil cover does not wash away. Use a spray attachment on hose to water fine seeds, don't aim hard spray directly at bed. Move the spray around to gradually soak the entire bed with several passes, do not let water

puddle. (Soaking seeds overnight will help them come up faster.)

4. Plant seeds at the right time.

 Look at charts on seed starting (Community Horticulture Fact Sheet #8) for correct planting dates. Seeds started too early will rot in the too cold soil or plants will suffer stress and never recover. The seeds will take between two days and two weeks to sprout depending on the kind of vegetable and the temperature of the soil.

5. Space and thin properly.

 Sow a little thicker than desired to ensure a good stand even if seed germination is bad. Thin the seedlings to give them plenty of room to develop. (Many thinnings can be eaten!)

INTENSIVE PLANT SPACING

Intensive gardening is possible where the soil is deeply dug and well amended. In such a soil, roots can go down for water and nutrients instead of out and consequently plants can be spaced much more closely.

For information about soil amendments: fertilizer, lime, and compost, get Community Horticulture Fact Sheet #6 "Soil Improvement." To learn how to double dig and make raised beds get Community Horticulture Fact Sheet #5 "Raised Bed Gardening." Both may be obtained free of charge by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to your Washington State University Cooperative Extension office. (Address below).

Think about planting your bed in blocks not rows. Distance between plants is the distance plant to plant in any direction.

CROP:	PLANT:	THIN TO:
Asparagus	12"	
Beans-bush	3"	6-8"
pole	6" (in trellised rows 3 ft apart)	
Beets	scatter	3-4"
Broccoli	6"	15-18"
Brussels sprouts	18-24" (use transplants)	
Cabbage	6"	12-20"
Carrots	scatter	2-4"
Cauliflower	15-18" (use young transplants)	
Celery	6"	10-12"
Chinese cabbage	6"	10-12"
Collards	6"	12-15"
Corn	12" (in 4 ft x 4 ft blocks minimum)	
Cucumbers	18" (trellised)	36"
Garlic	6-8" (from cloves)	
Kale	6-8"	10-15"
Leeks	6" (use transplants)	
Lettuce	scatter	6-12"
Mustard	scatter	4-6"
Onions - green	scatter	1-2"
bulbs	scatter	6-8"
Parsnips	scatter	4-6"
Peas bush	4"	6-8"
pole	2-3" (in trellised rows 3 ft apart)	
Potatoes	12"	
Pumpkin	36"	
Radish - regular	scatter	1-2"
daikon	scatter	4"
Spinach	scatter	4"
Squash- summer	24-36"	
winter	36"	
Swiss chard	6"	8-10"
Tomatoes	24" staked & pruned or 36" caged (use transplants)	
Turnips	scatter	3-6"