

Quick reference guide for planting vegetables in Wisconsin

by Robin Mittenthal, December 2009

Important notes about this guide:

- 1) This guide is a small section of a book-length manual for beginning gardeners called From the Ground Up. The manual includes more information about how to grow the crops discussed here, as well as general explanations of fertilizer, compost, weed management, and other related topics. It is available for free online at the following address: http://www.eagleheightsgardens.org/tips/garden_manual_v_1.1.pdf
- 2) Dates provided are appropriate for an average season in southern Wisconsin and other areas in zone 4 of the United States Department of Agriculture's Zone Map. In zone 4, average last frost date in the spring ranges from May 1 to May 30 and average first frost date in the fall ranges from September 1 to September 30. If you are located outside this zone, you should try to find locally appropriate dates (look online or talk to a horticulture extension staff person at the nearest state university), but you can also try to adjust by allowing six days difference for every 160 km (100 mi) of latitude you are away from Madison, Wisconsin. North, plant later; south, plant earlier.
- 3) Note that planting dates in many cases refer to transplants and *not* seeds. Transplants must be started substantially earlier, either indoors or in a small greenhouse called a cold frame.

Crop *	When to Plant **	Depth to Plant ***	Distance Apart In Row †	Distance Apart Between Rows ++	Days to Maturity +++
<p>* Note that some popular crops are grouped together (for example, spinach and lettuce are both covered under "greens," zucchini, yellow squash, pappans, and others are covered by "summer squash," and watermelons are listed with other crops under "melons"). Some crops you might like to grow (asparagus, corn, leeks, rhubarb, and rutabagas, for example) are not covered here but are discussed in the manual mentioned above.</p> <p>** See notes 2-3 for information about these dates</p> <p>*** s = seeds, tr = transplants</p> <p>† s = seed at about this distance, th = seed as noted, then "thin" (remove some plants so that remaining plants are at this distance) when plants begin to grow, tr = transplant to this distance</p> <p>++ If you are planting only one or a few plants, leave this much space around the plant(s)</p> <p>+++ When the plant or fruit will be ready to eat. Variation in dates can result from both weather and varieties used</p>					
Beans (many types)	May 10 to July 15 (can put in successive plantings every 2 weeks)	s 2.5 cm/1 in	s 2.5 cm/1 in, th 8-30 cm/3-12 in	45 cm-120 cm/ 18-48 in	55-90 days from seeding
Beets	April 15 to August 15 (can put in successive plantings at about 10-day intervals)	s 1 cm/0.5 in	s 2.5 cm/1 in, th 8 cm/3 in	25 cm/10 in	50-70 days from seeding
Broccoli	April 15 to August 1 (can put in successive plantings; early planting should be transplants)	tr - plant slightly deeper than they were originally or s 0.6-1.3 cm/0.25-0.5 in	s 2.5 cm/1 in, th 45-60 cm/18-24 in, or tr 45-60 cm/18-24 in	90 cm/36 in	60-70 days from transplanting
Brussels Sprouts	April 15 to May 15 (should be at least 16 weeks before first fall frost)	tr - plant slightly deeper than they were originally or s 0.6-1.3 cm/0.25 0.5 in	s 2.5 cm/1 in, th 45-60 cm/18-24 in, or tr 45-60 cm/18-24 in	90 cm/36 in	80-120 days from transplanting
Cabbage	April 15 (spring planting) or July 1 (fall planting)	tr - plant slightly deeper than they were originally or s 0.6-1.3 cm/0.25-0.5 in	s 2.5 cm/1 in, th 45-60 cm/18-24 in, or tr 45-60 cm/18-24 in	90 cm/36 in	65-70 days from transplanting
Cauliflower	Mid April to mid May (spring planting) and/or early July (fall planting)	tr - plant slightly deeper than they were originally or s 0.6-1.3 cm/0.25-0.5 in	s 2.5 cm/1 in, th 45-60 cm/18-24 in, or tr 45-60 cm/18-24 in	90 cm/36 in	50-60 days from transplanting
Carrots	April 15 followed by plantings as desired at 3-4 week intervals until early June	sow on surface of soil and cover with a thin layer of sand or fine soil (0.5 cm/0.3 in)	s 1 cm/ 0.4 in, th 4 cm/ 1.5 in	15 cm/6 in	70 days from seeding
Chard, Swiss	April 15 to July 1 (can plant two successive plantings, but one can last all season)	s 1.3-2.5 cm/0.5-1 in	s 2.5 cm/1 in, th 20 cm/8 in	30-60 cm/12-24 in	50-60 days from seeding
Collard greens	April 15 to July 1 (can plant one early planting and one late planting)	tr - plant slightly deeper than they were originally or s 0.6-1.3 cm/0.25-0.5 in	s 2.5 cm/1 in, th 45-60 cm/18-24 in, or tr 45-60 cm/18-24 in	90 cm/36 in	70-85 days from seeding
Cucumber	June 1 to July 1 (can plant successive plantings at 2-3 week intervals)	s 1.3 cm-2.5 cm/0.5 - 1 in or tr - match depth in pot to surface of garden	plant 5-8 seeds in a little clump every 30 cm (12 in), then when plants have their first true leaves thin each clump to the 2 healthiest plants. If transplanting, plant 2 plants together at 30 cm (12 in) intervals	120 cm/48 in	55-72 days from seeding
Eggplant	June 1 to July 1 (note that eggplants must usually be protected from flea beetles and potato beetles to do well here)	tr - plant slightly deeper than they were originally	tr 60 cm/24 in	60 cm/24 in	75-90 days from transplanting

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Flowers	Planting information is variable. See separate handout on flowers.				
Fruit	Most fruits are not appropriate for small gardens, but a few (particularly strawberries) can be fun to try even in a small space. Planting information is quite variable. See separate handout on fruits.				
Garlic	late October/ early Nov. (preferred) or April	tr (clove) - plant so that the pointed top of the clove is about 2.5 cm (1 in) under the soil surface	tr (cloves) 8 cm/3 in	15 cm/6 in	Harvest in mid to late July.
Greens	Includes spinach, lettuce, arugula, bok choy, and many others. Planting information is variable. See separate handout on greens.				
Herbs	Includes basil, oregano, thyme, rosemary, and many others. Planting information is variable. See separate handout on herbs.				
Kale	mid April to mid May (one planting yields into Nov. or Dec.)	tr - plant slightly deeper than they were originally or s 0.6-1.3 cm/0.25-0.5 in	s 2.5 cm/1 in, th 45-60 cm/18-24 in, or tr 45-60 cm/18-24 in	90 cm/36 in	55-70 days from transplanting
Kohlrabi	April 15 to July 15 (can plant multiple successive plantings)	tr - plant slightly deeper than they were originally or s 0.6-1.3 cm/0.25-0.5 in	s 2.5 cm/1 in, th 30 cm/12 in or tr 30 cm/12 in	60 cm/24 in	50-60 days from transplanting
Melons (various types)	May 20 to July 1	tr - match depth in pot to surface of garden	Most types need 60-90 cm/24-36 in	Most types need 60-90 cm/24-36 in	75-90 days from transplanting
Onions	April 15 to May 10	s 0.5-2 cm/0.25-0.75 in, or tr onion "sets," putting the bottom of the set about 2.5 cm/1 in underground	s 5 cm/2 in, th 13 cm/5 in	th 13 cm/5 in	80-110 days from seeding
Peas	April 15 (can also plant a fall crop in late July to September)	2.5 cm/1 in	s 5 cm/2 in	40 cm/15 in	55-70 days from seeding
Peppers (sweet and hot)	May 20 to July 1	tr - plant deeper than they were in their pots; plants will grow roots from their stems	tr 45 cm/18 in for hot peppers, a bit wider for sweet peppers	same spacing as in row	60-75 days from transplanting
Potatoes ("Irish")	April 15 to July 10 (very cold tolerant)	tr seed potatoes—cut large potatoes into pieces at least 1.5 in or 3 cm on a side, and put them 3-10 cm/1-3 in deep	tr 30 cm/12 in	30 cm/12 in	70-90 days
Pumpkin	May 20 to July 1 (but plant as early as possible to avoid frost and maximize harvest)	s 2.5 cm/1 in or tr—match depth in pot to surface of garden	tr 2 plants in a clump every 60 cm/24 in or s 4-6 seeds at the same spacing and remove all but 2 plants later	180 cm/72 in	85-105 days from seeding, 60-80 days from transplanting
Radish	mid-April through August (can plant multiple successive plantings a week or two apart, though summer plantings may not do well)	s 1.3 cm/0.5 in	s 1.3 cm/0.5 in th 2.5-5 cm/1-2 in (large varieties may need to be thinned to as much as 15 cm)	15 cm/6 in	various—depends on variety (some varieties need only 18 days from seeding, most take 21-27 days; some large storage varieties take 50 or more days)
Squash, summer	May 20 to July 1 (may plant two plantings at the ends of this window)	2.5 cm/1 in or tr - match depth in pot to surface of garden	Follow distance recommendations for pumpkins (above)	120 cm/48 in	45-85 days (depends on type, variety and weather)
Squash, winter	May 20 to July 1 (but plant as early as possible to avoid frost and maximize harvest)	2.5 cm/1 in or tr - match depth in pot to surface of garden	Follow distance recommendations for pumpkins (above)	180 cm/72 in	90-120 days from seeding, 70-100 days from transplanting
Tomato	May 20 to July 1 (can plant one planting at the beginning of this window and a second planting near the end)	tr - plant deeper (potentially several in or cm) in garden than in pot; plants will send out roots from their stems.	60-120 cm/24-48 in (some varieties get much larger than others—cherry tomatoes get biggest of all)	60-120 cm/24-48 in (some varieties get much larger than others)	65-80 days
Turnip	Same as for radishes, above	s shallowly (not more than 1.3 cm/0.5 in) and keep moist	s 3 cm/1 in, th 8 cm/3 in	30 cm/12 in	20-30 days (greens), 45-100 days (bulbs)