

Jump Start Your Garden: Learn the Basics of Seed Starting

Presented by Floyd Wright, 12 March 2019, Estes Valley Community Center

Sponsored by Estes Valley Community Garden www.evcg.org email evcg@ecg.org
and Estes Valley Recreation and Park District Senior and Adult Activities www.evrpd.com

Hardy Cool Season Crops Tolerant of Frosts

Arugula	Leeks, onion, shallots, chives	Broccoli
Asparagus	Peas	Cabbage
Fennel	Radish	Brussel Sprout
Chives	Rhubarb	Kale
Cilantro	Spinach	Kohlrabi
Collards	Sorrel	Turnip
Fava bean	Strawberry	Spinach
Garlic (fall plant)	Corn salad (mache)	Miner's Lettuce (Claytonia)
Horseradish	Parsley	Carrots
Beets	Chard	Celery
Lettuce	Parsnip	Mustard
Potato		

Growing cool season crops can extend the growing season in Estes Park significantly. Many can be direct seeded from April on. Transplants can be started indoors and planted outdoors from late May until the end of August. Fast growing crops like spinach, lettuce, most greens, cilantro, arugula and kale can be planted into August and still produce tender young greens into October. Many fast-growing greens can produce 2-4 harvests per season when you replace mature plants with new starts or plant in succession every couple of weeks.

Warm Season Crops Sensitive to Frost

Cantaloupe	Cucumber	Bean
Pepper	Squash	Watermelon
Corn	Eggplant	Sweet potato
Okra	Pumpkin	Lima Bean
Beans	Tomato	Basil

Except for beans, which grow well here in Estes Park, and basil and squash, which have more limited success, the rest of these crops are challenging to grow outside here but can be successful with protection (cold frame or greenhouse) that provides warmer nights and hotter days. This group of crops is constrained by the boundaries of first and last frosts, cool days and cool nights. These plants are tropical or subtropical in origin.

Probability of Frost and Growing Season Length Summary*

Estes Park	Spring Frost Probability			Fall Frost Probability			Length of Growing Season		
	90%	50%	10%	10%	50%	90%	90%	50%	10%
32 degrees	5/27	6/9	6/21	9/3	9/14	9/25	83	97	111
28 degrees	5/5	5/21	6/6	9/10	9/21	10/1	106	123	140
24 degrees	4/18	5/8	5/27	9/18	10/4	10/19	125	149	173

*This chart is from Colorado State University Extension. Colorado Master Gardener *GardenerNotes* #746.

When to Plant Transplants into Garden

Crop	Weeks from Sowing To Transplant	Weeks from Transplant To mature crop	1st Plant out as Transplant
Beets	4-6 weeks	5-8 weeks	Mid-Late May
Bok Choy	4-6	3-6	Mid-Late May
Broccoli	5-7	6-12	Mid-Late May
Cabbage	5-7	7-15	Mid-Late May
Celery	10-12	10-12	Early-Mid June
Kale	5-7	4-8	Mid-Late May
Kohlrabi	5-7	4-8	Mid-Late May
Lettuce	3-5	5-7	Late May-June
Melon, squash	3-4	8-15	Mid-June
Onion, leek	10-12	8-15	Mid-Late May
Tomato	6-8	8-15	Mid June
Wild Strawberry	12	6-12	Mid-Late May

Transplant date some has flexibility. Frost hardy crops can be planted in ground late May. Frost sensitive crops, like tomatoes, can be planted around mid-June. Squash will benefit from a later transplanting (mid-June, when nights, and soil temperature, have warmed up). Squash planted June 15 will grow faster and catch up to earlier planted squash because the days are warmer.

Edible Flowers

These plants have mild, pleasant flavor. Calendula petals, Johnny Jump Ups (Viola or Pansy family), roses, hollyhocks. Nasturtiums, which are frequently promoted as edible, are very hot and spicy.

Resources:

The Winter Harvest with Eliot Coleman. This is an excellent 1-hour video on YouTube of a speech and slide show Eliot made at a conference regarding his lifetime of research and practice with year around gardening in a cold climate in Maine. The practices he outlines work very well for those who would like to grow vegetables year around, even here in Estes Park. <https://youtu.be/Xm6khNRIGhE>

Some of my favorite unique seed companies for unique seeds.

Johnny's Seeds. Johnnyseeds.com. Johnny's has in depth crop culture info online and in their catalog.

Seed Savers Exchange. Seedsavers.org. Excellent source of heirloom vegetable varieties.

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds. Rareseeds.com. Perhaps the most extensive and international selection of open-pollinated and heirloom seeds most of us will ever see!

Native Seeds/SEARCH. Nativeseeds.org. Collections of North American native crops used historically by indigenous peoples.

Supplies. Greenhouse Mega Store. Greenhousemegastore.com.

Supplies. Groworganic.com

Drip Works. Dripworks.com. Good source for drip irrigation supplies for the home gardener.

High altitude gardening info.

Our friends across the mountains in Grand County have 4 successful community gardens. Their web site has excellent info on a wide variety of high-altitude gardening topics: <https://www.grandcommunitygardens.org>
Many good resources on our own website, Estes Valley Community Garden: www.evcg.org.