

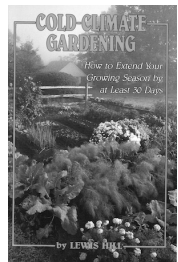
A Very Brief Overview of Mountain Vegetable Gardening

Good soil is essential for any vegetable garden. Since our native soils are poor, at best, they require substantial applications of mature compost (like **Bumper Crop** or **Amend**) and biologically alive organic fertilizers (like Gardener&Bloom or Dr.Earth). If you are just starting out, consider testing your soil with a simple kit.



The **location** of your "production" vegetable garden is crucial to success. A garden should receive at least 6 hours of direct sunlight a day. Windbreaks and heat-sinks may improve the microclimate. Rocks and walls collect solar heat all day and radiate warmth all night. Choose a location that allows cold air to flow out of your garden in the evening. Cold air drains into low pockets. **In 1993 we had 6 nights without frost in Truckee.**

In his book **Cold Climate Gardening**, Lewis Hill, says "Cold does not actually exist. It is merely the absence of heat." We protect gardens with row-cover to preserve heat.



Frost Fabric / Floating Row Cover- Since 1985 we have tested many brand of spun-bonded poly- row covers to protect the nursery and our own gardens from frost *and from summer hail.*

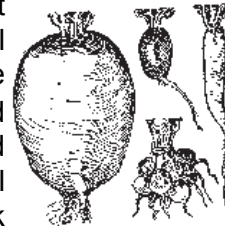
The most durable and versatile row-cover is 1.5oz. n-sulate that offers 6-8°F protection and 50% light. We double the layers for extreme cold.



I have used it over my garden for weeks at a time with water, light and air going through all day yet warmth staying in at night. We offer it in 10x12' packages or by the yard (12' wide) from the Villager's bulk rolls. **Always have frost protection fabric on hand. There is NO "average last date of frost" in Truckee.**

Cool season perennial herbs and veggies. Asparagus and ostrich ferns produce succulent new growth during the cool spring months. Rhubarb and horseradish are extremely vigorous perennials. Chives, lovage, marjoram, mint, oregano, sage, tarragon, and thyme all produce well and are attractive perennials in the landscape.

Cool season annual herbs and veggies. These hardy and frost tolerant annuals are planted in the cool months of early spring. These crops can be directly seeded into the ground or started earlier indoor. Common cool season vegetables include bok choy, beets, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, collards, chard, garlic, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsnips, peas, potatoes (foliage may frost), radishes, rutabagas, spinach and turnips.



Warm season annual herbs and veggies. Tender plants require warmer temperatures to germinate, sprout, grow and set fruit. These crops can be directly seeded into the ground later in the season. Tomatoes, peppers and eggplant need to be started indoors in March. Common warm season crops include beans, corn, cucumbers, squash, and zucchini. Tender herbs include anise, basil, cilantro, dill, fennel, and nasturtium. These plants should be located together in the warmest part of the garden for easy frost protection.



Hardening-Off

Seedlings need a "hardening" period of a little more sun and cold every day for a couple of weeks until they can handle the full force of our intense sun, drying winds and mountain chill. Row-cover can be left over the new plantings for a week or more to help them adapt. Be very careful at first not to sun-burn, freeze or dry your seedlings. Remember, tomato, pepper, cucumber, pumpkin, squash and zucchini can never tolerate frost without protection. Cold frames and un-heated greenhouses are as great for hardening-off as they are for raising cool season greens.

the Villager nursery & gifts

Thursday, April 19, 2012

Indoor Seeding Times

Mid-February through Early May

Start seed indoors from late February through April for planting outdoors in mid to late May (4-8 weeks): broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, leek, lettuce, onion, pepper and tomato. The first Tuesday in March is the traditional day to plant tomato seeds indoors in mountain and northern climates.

Fruits and Berries: Dormant, over-wintered apple, pear, pie-cherry and plum trees as well as blueberry, currant, elderberry and raspberry can be planted as soon as the soil is workable.



Sweet Peas aren't edible but April 1 is THE day to plant them. Choose a sunny spot and prepare the soil with rich compost, organic fertilizer and a little limestone. 3-5 days before planting, soak your seeds in water for a few hours. Sprout them in a bag with a moist paper towel. When the root tip is just emerging, carefully plant the seeds in a 2" trench and cover with 1/2" of soil. As the seedlings grow the trench will fill in.



Lathyrus odoratus.

Late April through Mid-May

Start these quick growing tender veggies indoors from late April to mid May, for planting outdoors in June (2-5 weeks): corn, cucumber, pumpkin, squash and zucchini.



Outdoor Seeding Times

Mid-March through Early May

As soon as the ground is thawed and workable (not muddy) plant asparagus, beets, soft-neck garlic, horseradish, ostrich fern, leaf lettuce, parsnips, radish, rhubarb, rutabaga, spinach, and Swiss chard. Include calendula, dianthus, and viola for edible flowers. Use milk jugs full of water next to seedlings to protect them from hard frosts. Cover the garden with n-sulate floating row cover.

Early May through Mid-May

Solarize the soil for a few days before planting for better results because warmer soil will encourage seeds of broccoli, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, lettuce, mustard, pea, sunflower and any previously mentioned.

Mid-May through Early June

Plant potatoes. Start a few hills of potatoes at two-week intervals until late June for "new potatoes" throughout the summer.

Early June through Mid-June

Warm soils (above 50°F) are required for germination of warm season veggies. Consider risking an earlier seeding of these crops if warm weather is predicted but generally wait until after June 10 for beans, carrots, corn, squash, and zucchini

Mid-June to Late June

Plant more leaf lettuce, spinach, radish, peas, Swiss chard and pumpkin.

July and August

Re-seed radish, leaf lettuce and spinach.

Organic Gardening Notes

Soil should anchor roots, hold moisture and nutrients, and allow in oxygen. Healthy soil is teeming with life. Beneficial soil organisms release long lasting nutrients, prevent disease and promote vigorous plant growth. *A teaspoon of healthy soil may contain 100 million bacteria, 400-800 feet of fungal hyphae and millions of other microorganisms.*

Soil amended with mature compost is like a perfect house, kitchen, pantry and cold storage where the roots reside. Organic fertilizers, are the raw foods in the pantry and in storage. Organic fertilizers that contain live microorganisms provide the gardeners, chefs, and housekeepers.

Billions are spent annually on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. We waste millions of gallons of water and we expose our children and pets to chemical levels ten times the rates that are used in commercial farming. Soil life can be killed with minutes of exposure to many chemical fertilizers and it can take years to bring them back.

Soil under organic agriculture management can accumulate about 1,000 pounds of carbon per acre foot of soil each year. This accumulation is equal to about 3,500 pounds of carbon dioxide per acre taken from the air and sequestered into soil organic matter.

Helping Mountain Gardens Thrive Since 1975

10678 Donner Pass Road

530-587-0771

villagernursery.com