



Vegetable Planting Dates

Zone 5b surrounding Chicago, Zone 6a (a small oval east of I-294 close to the lake)

VERY HARDY VEGETABLES Cool-Season crops

Asparagus, crowns (Crowns Out Mar 25-April 10)	Onion, seed (Long day variety only) In Garden March-June
Brussels sprouts ^{F1} In June 1-30 / Out Jul 1-15	Onion, sets In Garden April 1-25
Cabbage ^{F1} In Mar 1-Apr 1/ Out Apr 15 -May 15	Pea In Garden April 1-25
Collard ^{F1} In Mar 1-Apr 1/ Out Apr 15 -May 15	Potato, Irish (Seed pieces) In Garden Apr 10-15 or June 1-5
Kohlrabi In Mar 1-Apr 1/ Out Apr 15-May 15 (In Garden successive Apr 10-Jul 20)	Radish In Garden Mar 15-Apr 15; Fall: Jul 20-30
Leek, seed In Feb/ Out Apr 10	Rhubarb, plants (Plants) In Garden Mar 25
Lettuce, Leaf In Mar 15-May 10 L / Out Apr 10-May 10 (Successive In Garden Apr 10-May 10; Fall: Jul 15-Aug 20)	Rutabaga In Garden Apr 1-15; (Fall: In Garden Jun 25-July 5)
Mustard greens In Garden Apr 10-25; Fall Jul 15-25	Spinach In Mar 1/ Out Mar 25 (In Garden Mar 15-Apr 1); Fall: In Garden Jul 15-Aug 15)
	Turnip In Garden Apr 1-15; Fall: Jul 10-20

FROST-TOLERANT VEGETABLES Cool-Season crops

Beets In Apr 1-Jun 15/ Out May 1-Jul 15 (BEST In Garden after Apr 1-Jul 1)	Leek In Feb/ Out late May
Broccoli ^{F2} In Mar 10-Mar 25/ Out Apr 15 to May 10	Lettuce, head In Mar 1-Apr 5 L / Out Apr 15-Jun 10
Carrot In Garden only Apr 15-Jul 5	Salsify (Sandy or muck soil 24" deep; not recommended in clay soils.)
Cauliflower ^{F2} In Mar 25-Apr 5/ Out May 1-Jun 25 (In Garden Apr 10)	Parsley In Mar 15-Apr 30/ Out May 10-June 15
Chard, Swiss ^{F2} In Mar 25/ Out May 15 (BEST In Garden after Mar 25)	Parsnip In Garden Apr 25-May 15
Chinese cabbage In Mar 10/ Out Apr 25(Fall In June 1/ Out Jun 25-Jul 5)	

TENDER VEGETABLES Warm-Season

Bean, snap In Garden May 15 or when ***Temp above 55° F; plant every two weeks until Jul 15	New Zealand Spinach (Hot weather Spinach substitute) In Garden May 10-30
Corn, sweet In Garden Apr 15-May 30	Tomato In Apr 1-May 1/ Out May 10-June 5

WARM LOVING VEGETABLES Warm-Season

Bean, lima In Garden May 25 when ***Temp above 55° F; Plant every two weeks until Jul 10	Okra In May 1/ Out May 30 (Fall: In Garden June 25 to July 5.)
Cucumber In peat pots Apr 25/ Out May 25 (or In Garden May 15-30)	Pepper In peat pots Apr 5-20/ Out May 20-Jun 10
Eggplant In Apr 5-20 / Out May 20-Jun 10	Potato, sweet (Slips) In Garden May 25
Gourds In peat pots May 10/ Out May 25-Jun 5 (In Garden May 25-Jun 1)	Pumpkin In peat pots Apr 30/ Out May 25 (or In Garden)
Muskmelon In peat pots Apr 25-May 5/ Out May 20-Jun 15 (Or In Garden May 25- June 1)	Squash, (Summer or Winter) In peat pots Apr 30/ Out May 25 (Or In Garden May 1-Jun 5)
	Watermelon In peat pots Apr 25-May 5/ Out May 20-Jun 15 (or In Garden)

Sow seed indoors on **In date**, move plants to garden on **Out date**. **L** means needs light to germinate. Sow seed directly in garden on **in garden** dates listed at the top of each section. Check references for specific other requirements. Check weather; adjust planting dates to predicted last frosts. Harden off plants before setting in garden. More information at <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/> ; <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/firstgarden/> ; <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/cook/>

^{F1} Fall: In Garden June 1-5 ^{F2} Fall: In Garden June 25 to July 5 ***Temp: Plant when daily air temperatures stays above 55 degrees Fahrenheit (and the soil has warmed.) In peat pots—transplants poorly from other containers. Plant 3"-4" peat pots directly into soil. Tear off pot top so peat does not stick above soil level and wick away moisture. *References: Ball Culture Guide, 1999; From Seed to Bloom, 1995; Illinois Master Gardener Manual, 2000; Month-by-Month Gardening in Illinois, 1999.*

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Annual Flower Planting Dates

Cook County USDA Hardiness Zone 5b or 6a

Annual flowers tend to bloom for long periods. They die at the end of one growing season. Sowing your seed gives you more choices than plants from retail markets alone. This table can help you plan your seed sowing. Sow seed indoors on or near the **In date**, move plants to the garden on or after the **Out date**. Sow seed directly in the garden on **In Garden** dates. Check seed packets and other references for more detailed information. **L** means light is needed to germinate. **D** means drought tolerant after the plants become well established in the garden.

Cook County has an average of 170 frost-free days generally between May 15 and October 1. However, frost can occur at any time. The average last spring frost is April 30 (up to 5 days earlier close to Lake Michigan). The average first freeze will occur on or after October 15 (up to 5 days later close to Lake Michigan). Check weather forecasts and adjust planting dates to predicted last frosts. Harden off plants before setting them in the garden.

HARDY FLOWERS* can tolerate light frosts after hardening off without being killed or badly damaged.

Alyssum (Sweet)-D	In Mar 15 L / Out May 15 or In Garden Apr 30	Flowering Kale -D	In Jul 1 / Out Sept 1
Calendula -D	In Apr 1-Apr 15/ Out May 15	Pansy -D	In Dec 15/ Out Mar 15, In July/Out Sept
Dusty Miller (Senecio)-D	In Mar 1/ Out May 15	Snapdragon	In or In Garden Mar 1 L / Out Apr 30
Flowering Cabbage -D	In Jul 1/ Out Sept 1	Strawflower -D	In Mar 1 L / Out May 15

HALF-HARDY FLOWERS* can tolerate cold, wet, damp weather but can be damaged or killed by frost.

Ageratum -D	In Feb 15 L / Out May 15	Lobelia	In Feb 10/ Out May 10
Cleome -D	In Mar 15/ Out May 30 or In garden May 15	Marigold -D	In Apr 1/ Out May 10
Dianthus	In Mar 1/ Out May 1	Morning Glory	In Garden April 15
Four O'clock	In or In Garden April 10 L / Out May 10	Nicotiana -D	In Mar 1/ Out May 30
Gazania	In Mar 1/ Out May 15	Petunia -D	In Feb 1 L / Out May 10
Geranium	In Jan 1/ Out May 10	Salvia -D	In Mar 15/ Out May 15

TENDER FLOWERS* need warm soils to germinate and grow properly.

Amaranthus -D	In Feb 20/ Out May 30	Nasturium -D	(In pots) In Apr 15/ Out May 10 or In garden May 15 (Best in poor soil)
Bachelor's Button	In Mar 1/ Out May 15 or In Garden May 15	Ornamental Millet -D	(In pots) In Apr 20/ Out May 10
Begonia	In Jan 15 L / Out May 30	Portulaca -D	In Mar 15/ Out May 15
Browallia	In Feb 10 L / Out May 30	Purple Hyacinth Bean	In Mar 1/ Out May 25
Cockscomb -D	In Apr 10 L / Out May 15	Scarlet Runner Bean	Out May 15 (If temp. stays above 55°F)
China Aster	In Mar 1/ Out May 15	Statice -D	In Mar 1/ Out May 15
Coleus -D	In Mar 1 L / Out May 30	Sunflower	In or In Garden Apr 15/ Out May 15
Cosmos -D	In or In Garden Apr 1 / Out May 30	Verbena -D	In Mar 1 L / Out May 1
Dahlia	(Tuberous roots) In Garden May 30	Vinca (Catharanthus)-D	In Feb 5/ Out May 15
Gaillardia -D	In Mar 1/ Out May 10	Wax Begonia -D	In Mar 1/ Out May 10
Gladiolus	(Corm) In Garden June 15- Jul 15	Zinnia -D	In Apr 1/ Out May 30 or In Garden May 15-June 15
Impatiens	In Feb 1 L / Out May 10		
Melanpodium -D	In Mar 30/ Out May 10 or In Garden May 10		

*Annuals are classified as Hardy, Half-Hardy or Tender. Classifications refer to the temperature range that annuals need in order to germinate and grow successfully. A plant's hardiness does not refer to its overall strength or vigor, but to its specific ability to withstand cold.

References: Ball Culture Guide, 1999; From Seed to Bloom, 1995; Illinois Master Gardener Manual, 2000; Month-by-Month Gardening in Illinois, 1999.

