

Grandpa's

Garden

Cheat-sheet

This is the only text for this page.
The rest of the page is supposed to be blank.
However, you can use it to sketch out a plan
for your garden. Don't forget to put in flowers,
and some pathways (about 2 feet wide).

ENJOY!

ARTICHOKE (GLOBE)
(Cynara scolymus)

Start the seeds inside 8 weeks before the last spring frost. Transplant into the garden after the last spring frost, spacing 2-3 feet apart. Cut back in the fall and mulch to protect from the winter weather. You may harvest your crop the following spring.

Plant 1 fingernail deep, in planting pots.
Water during the flower head formation. Then in Fall, just before they go to sleep.

Remember to mulch them lightly for the Winter.

ASPARAGUS

Soaking the seeds overnight will produce better germination. Please allow 3 years for this perennial to produce at full capacity - it will be worth the wait!

Plant 1 fingernail deep, inside in the Fall. Set them out in the Spring.

Water after fern-like growth has come on. This is when the roots develop more.

They will winter-over just fine, and do not need mulch.

BEANS

For bush type beans, plant the seeds 1 knuckle deep, about 2 handwidths apart, in rows 18 inches apart. Beans do not do well in a wide row planting unless planted on the "edges" of the rows. They must have room on either side for maximum production.

Plant after all danger of frost has past. Do not plant too soon! If the soil has not warmed sufficiently, the seeds will rot in the ground before they germinate.

You can water overhead, though most recommend you do not. However, you should not handle plants when they are wet.

Pole Beans - plant the seeds 1 knuckle deep. Till an area 4 feet by 4 feet. Incorporate compost into the soil. Make a teepee out of 3 to 4 poles stuck into the bed. Plant 3 to 4 seeds *around each pole*. Use a soaker hose to water the bed. (Again, Grandpa waters overhead, but you must do so in the morning, to let the plants dry out during the day.)

BEETS
(Beta vulgaris)

Begin planting beets 2 to 3 weeks before the last spring frost, making additional plantings 2 weeks apart for a continuous harvest all during the growing season. Sow the seeds 1 fingernail deep in loose, deeply tilled soil, in wide rows, or a raised bed.

Plant 1 seed per handwidth in all directions. By using a wide 3 x 5 feet row, you can expect to harvest over 200 beets - plenty for fresh use and canning! Beets are a heavy feeder, so fertilize at planting time. Water with the rest of the garden.

Don't forget, you can eat the greens as well as the beets!

BROCCOLI

Start the seeds inside 8 weeks before the last Spring frost*. Transfer outside when the plants are 5 weeks old, spacing 12 to 18 inches apart. In a 3 by 5 foot bed, you can transplant 15 plants. Harvest the main head in 60-90 days and continue to pick the side shoots until they quit forming. Broccoli is a heavy feeder, so work plenty of compost into the soil before planting.

Water is important during the formation of the head, as it will help to keep the flowers from opening too soon.

* This is a cool weather crop, and should actually be started in August in our area, it will head in late Winter. You can try it in the Spring, but will most likely get really pretty flowers instead of heads. (They are edible!)

CABBAGE

Start inside 8 weeks before the last Wpring frost*. Transplant outside when the cabbages are 5 weeks old. For the largest heads, work plenty of compost into the soil and till deeply. Plant in a wide row, spacing the seedlings 12 inches apart. Do not let your transplants get more than 5 weeks old before transplanting, or maximum size may not be achieved.

*This is a cool weather crop, and should actually be started in August in our area, it will head in late Winter. Water is important in order to have full heads.

CARROTS

(Daucus carota var. sativus)

We recommend planting carrots in a raised bed. Begin to plant 2 weeks before the last spring frost, making additional plantings every 2 to 3 weeks for a continuous harvest all summer long.

Plant the seeds 1 fingernail deep in loose, deeply tilled soil, placing a few seeds 3 finger widths apart in all directions. You can thin your crop to one plant every 2 knuckles apart, using scissors to do so. By using scissors, you will not disturb the roots of your remaining carrots.

You can start harvesting baby carrots 35 to 40 days after planting the seeds, and then the remainder of the crop when they are fully mature. Beware, though, the crop can take a full 6 months to fully mature!

CAULIFLOWER

Start the seeds inside 8 weeks before the last Spring frost*. Transfer outside when the plants are 5 weeks old, spacing 12 to 18 inches apart, in a wide bed.

In a 3 foot by 5 foot bed, you can transplant 15 plants. Cauliflower is a heavy feeder, so incorporate plenty of compost into the soil before planting. Harvest the main head in 60-90 days.

*This is a cool weather crop, and should actually be started in August in our area, it will head in late Winter. Water is important in head formation, do not let them dry out during this time.

COLE CROPS

Growing broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower and kohlrabi in the Fall for an extra treat at Summer's end is a great idea! All do well in the cool, Fall nights.

CORN (Zea mays)

Corn and popcorn is best grown in full sun, but make sure it does not shade your other crops when it reaches its full height.

Corn is a heavy feeder, so work plenty of compost into the soil before planting. Rotate this crop in after a planting of beans, peas, or peanuts.

Sow after all danger of frost has passed and the soil is quite warm (70-72 degrees F.). Planting in soil that has not warmed sufficiently will cause the seeds to rot before they will sprout.

Plant 1-2 knuckles deep, every 12 inches. Rows should be about 24 inches apart. To insure proper formation of the ears, plant in a block of at a 4 foot by 4 foot block. Divide the block into 16, 1 foot by 1 foot, squares. Plant in the middle of each square.

With this method, you can harvest 16 to 24 ears from a small garden area. Harvest when the kernels are full and milky when pinched. This will occur in 12 to 18 days after the silk first shows.

Remember, corn will cross pollinate readily with other varieties of corn, resulting in poor quality ears or lack of flavor. So, plant only one variety per "season."

CUCUMBERS

Plant outside 1 to 2 weeks after the last Spring frost. They should be planted 1 knuckle deep.

Growing cucumbers on a trellis makes for ease of harvesting and more thorough pest control. Plant 1 seed every 8 to 12 inches along the trellis. As the plants grow, they will need help at first guiding them up the trellis.

Harvest the cucumbers often and do not let the cucumbers get too big, as this will slow up future productivity of the plant. Cucumbers like plenty of sun and water. Avoid wetting the plants too much when watering. Watering in the morning helps, as the plants can dry off during the day.

If a cucumber plant starts to wilt from a bacterial infection, remove the infected plant immediately. *DO NOT* put the diseased plant in your compost pile.

LETTUCE (Lactuca sativa)

Sow (this means to actually sow them, not "plant" them) the seeds in early spring, as soon as the soil can be worked; this occurs about four weeks before the last expected spring frost. The packages say to plant the seeds 1/8 inch deep, but this is nearly impossible to gauge. In practice, just put the seeds on top of the soil, then come back and gently sprinkle the little bit of soil on them. Just enough to barely cover the seeds.

They NEED light to germinate. Sow them in a wide row, 2 handwidths apart in all directions.

Make sure the soil contains a good supply of nitrogen, which is necessary for good leaf production. Plant every two weeks for a continuous harvest all summer long. Make your early spring plantings in a sunny location; however, as the weather warms up, start planting in a partially shaded spot.

Lettuce sown in hot weather goes to seed quickly, so sow extra and pick often once the leaves reach the desirable size. During the Summer, a good spot to grow lettuce is against the house on the side that receives the morning sun.

TIP : In a wide row planting, 2 feet by 2 feet, 16 plants may be harvested. In a 2 foot by 4 foot area, you can grow enough lettuce to keep your salad bowl filled all Summer long!

MELONS

Plant the seeds outside after the last Spring frost - don't be in too big of a hurry to plant, as the ground must be warm enough for the seeds to germinate!

For watermelons, plant a few seeds in hills 6 to 8 feet apart. The reason for this is that each vine will likely produce no more than 2 watermelons (actually berries).

For the other melons, plant 4 to 6 feet apart. Plant them 1 knuckle deep. Work plenty of compost into the soil before planting, as melons are heavy feeders.

Melons need plenty of water during the growing season, so it is a good idea to use soaker hoses or a drip irrigation system. Better yet, visit them every day with a hose. Also, Melons should be planted in the sunniest spot in the garden.

PEAS

Plant 1 knuckle deep directly outside in the garden 6 to 8 weeks before the last spring frost, planting every 3 inches in a row. Before planting, set up either stakes or a trellis for the peas to climb on while growing.

Remember to keep the soil moist after germination. Do not add extra nitrogen to the soil, as this will promote leaf growth at the expensive of pea production.

SNAP PEAS
(Pisum sativum)

Grow as you would regular green peas, picking when the pods are filled. The pod is edible and tastes great in salads, or cook as you would green beans.

SNOW PEAS
(Pisum sativum)

Grow as you would regular green peas, but pick the pods before any seeds form. The pod is edible and used extensively in oriental cooking, as well as in salads.

PEPPERS & EGGPLANTS

Start pepper seeds and eggplant seeds indoors, 6 weeks before the last spring frost, using 3 to 4 inch pots. This size pot is necessary in order to produce nicely sized plants for transplanting.

Using fine potting soil, plant the seeds 1 fingernail deep. Remember, pepper seeds need warm soil to germinate! The best, and least expensive way to ensure this, is to place them on top of the refrigerator!!! It keeps the temperature right, and they seem to like the vibration. Pepper and eggplant seeds take approximately 10-15 days to germinate.

Once the outside soil temperature has warmed, about 1 to 2 weeks after the last spring frost, transplant in a sunny location. Work a large amount of compost into the soil before planting.

When transplanting, USE GRANDPA'S SECRET YOU WON'T NEED TO DO THIS. Instead, use styrofoam cups with the bottom cut off as your seed starting pot, then plant cup and all into the garden! You can use either a soaker hose or a drip irrigation system to avoid getting water on the plant leaves. Or, just water in the morning, by hand. To "sweeten" the soil, use wood ash for additional Phosphorus.

PUMPKINS

Plant the seeds after all danger of frost has passed in a sunny location of the garden. Sow the seeds 1 knuckle deep, 4 feet apart, in rows/hills 4 feet apart.

Work plenty of compost into the soil before planting, as pumpkins are heavy feeders.

Remember to fertilize your pumpkin patch monthly, or if you prefer, and I do, just plant them after a crop of peas, beans, or peanuts. Pumpkins take a lot of space in the garden, but are fun to watch grow, as well as to eat!

RADISH

(Raphanus sativus)

Plant radish seeds 2 to 3 weeks before the last Spring frost. Plant the seeds 1 fingernail deep and 1 handwidth apart in all directions.

Remember to resow again late summer for a delightful fall harvest, too! Delicious, crunchy radishes in only 3 to 5 weeks! Note that some Radishes can get BIG! German Giant is an example. They are fun to grow, and fun for children.

SPINACH

(Spinacia oleracea)

Plant the seeds outside 6 to 8 weeks before the last Spring frost. Plant them 1 fingernail to 1 knuckle deep. Using a wide row method for planting, sow 2 handwidths apart, going in all directions. In as little space as 3'x 3', you can harvest from over 120 spinach plants !!

As the weather warms up, sow spinach seeds in a shaded location, as it quickly bolts once the temperature rises above 75 degrees F - Also, Spinach will bolt (go to seed) when the days get long enough. Planting in shade can help to extend this time. Don't forget to plan a fall crop! Sow 4 to 6 weeks before the first expected Fall frost - spinach loves the cool weather, and will stay green and produce all Winter long here.

SQUASH, SUMMER

Plant the seeds 1 knuckle deep, about 2 feet apart, and at least 4 feet away from other vegetable rows, outside in a sunny location, after all danger of frost has passed.

Hint: A very good method of planting is to sow 2 to 3 seeds in the middle of a 4' x 4' raised bed. Work plenty of compost into the soil before planting. Squash is a heavy feeder and should be fertilized monthly during the growing season. Or, you can plant it to follow peas, beans, or peanuts.

SQUASH, WINTER

Plant the seeds 1 knuckle deep, 2 feet apart, in rows 4 to 5 feet apart, in a sunny location of your garden outside after all danger of frost has passed.

Work plenty of compost into the soil before planting and fertilize monthly during the growing season. Or, you can plant it to follow peas, beans, or peanuts.

Harvest the squash when the skin is tough and cannot be pierced with your fingernail. Store the squash in a cool, dry place for winter use.

SWISS CHARD

(Beta vulgaris, cicla group)

Plant 1 knuckle deep outside 6 to 8 weeks before the last Spring frost. Using a wide row method for planting, plant seeds 4 handwidths apart, going in all directions.

They will stay green and keep producing all Winter long, and are nearly perennial in our area. (I have had mine for 3 years, and they are still going strong!)

TOMATOES
(Lycopersicon lycopersicum)

Start tomato seeds indoors using individual 3 inch diameter pots. The use of smaller pots can produce spindly plants that will not produce fruit well when transplanted.

The best germination rates occur when the soil temperature is between 72 and 80 degrees F. The best, and least expensive way to ensure this, is to place them on top of the refrigerator! It keeps the temperature right, and they seem to like the vibration.

After four weeks, transplant your seedlings into larger pots. About 10 days before the last spring frost, gradually begin hardening off your plants outdoors.

A week after the last Spring frost, transplant your seedlings to a sunny location outside. Make sure to work plenty of compost into the area, as tomatoes are heavy feeders. Bury your plants deeply, maintaining a distance of 1 to 2 feet between tomato plants, in rows 3 feet apart. You can even pinch off all the leaves except for the top few and bury the entire stem in the soil.

When transplanting, put a collar of newspaper around the stem of the plant to avoid cutworm damage. OR, IF YOU USE GRANDPA'S SECRET YOU WON'T NEED TO DO THIS. Instead, use styrofoam cups with the bottom cut off as your seed starting pot, then plant cup and all into the garden!

Tomatoes can be staked or caged, since many of the older varieties don't do well when allowed to sprawl on the ground, as they are not resistant to early blight.

Once the tomatoes start growing, pinch off all the bottom leaves that are touching the soil.

Steady water is essential, to prevent splitting.

OR... You can just sow them outside, and they will do just fine! No mess, no worry, no transplanting, just tomatoes!

Watermelon

Plant after all danger of frost has passed. About one knuckle deep. Keep moist but don't drown the seeds. Most take about 3 months from the time they first pop their leaves above the soil to actually mature.

All melons, but especially Watermelons, love warm to hot weather. Pour on the water as they mature, and test them for that familiar "thump" to see if they are ripe.

Enjoy!

HERBS

Start the plants indoors in individual 3" diameter pots. Barely cover the seeds with soil and do not water from above, as this will disturb the small herb seeds.

Sow seeds six weeks before last spring frost. The best germination rates occur when the soil temperature is between 72 and 80 degrees F. The best, and least expensive way to ensure this, is to place them on top of the refrigerator! It keeps the temperature right, and they seem to like the vibration.

About 10 days before the last spring frost, start hardening off the plants gradually outside. A week after the last spring frost, transplant the plants outdoors, or transplant into permanent, larger pots.

DON'T BOTHER WITH HYBRIDS, OR SPRAYS.

If you plant "out of season" (either early or late) the bugs which would eat your crops are usually not around.

Hybrids are "OK" if you don't want to save seeds, and don't mind being dependent on big companies to provide you with your plants. Heirloom plants, on the other hand, ARE the plant FROM WHICH HYBRIDS ARE MADE. Without these, there can be no more hybrids!

HOW DEEP WAS THAT???

What is a "fingernail"? The length of an "average" fingernail is about 1/4 inch.

OK, what about a "knuckle"? That is about 1/2 inch for the first knuckle, and about 1 inch for the second knuckle. Either "knuckle" will do for planting, just poke it into the soil.

A "handwidth"? If you put your palm down on the ground, that is one handwidth, or about 3-4 inches.

This spacing guide means you do not need a depth gauge, a tape measure, or any other device to plant your garden... and it means that, because our hands are "average" enough, children can use it as well.

Notes:

