

## Tennessee Vegetable Planting Guide

### Frost Dates:

Average Last Frost: April 15<sup>th</sup>  
Average First Frost: October 14<sup>th</sup>

### Transplants

Some vegetables need to be started indoors and hardened off before being planted. In general transplants should be wider than they are tall and will have to be started four to eight weeks before planting. You'll need to check individual varieties for how old they should be before transplanting and how long to harden them off. I have noted vegetables that need to be done as transplants (or slips in the case of potatoes) in the following tables with an asterisk (\*).

### Plot/Bed Setup

Due to Middle Tennessee's frequently wet springs, it is highly recommended that you layout and setup your garden in the fall. Prepping your beds during the dryer but cooler fall will help you be able to get into the garden earlier and allow nature to do some of the work for you.

Choose your site, a place with 6 – 8 hours of light and hopefully some mid-late afternoon shade. The agricultural extension office recommends that you perform a soil test to determine the nutrient content and ph of the soil. Kill out and remove any grass and weeds in the area. Spread out and till in 4-6 inches of compost and pine fines (or some other amendment) 6-8 inches deep. In lieu of tilling you may want to just have the ground loosened by using a turning plow to gently lift and expose deeper soil. At this stage you would also need to add whatever the extension office recommended to bring the site in line with your usage. I would spread another inch or two of compost across the site, and may want to pile any leaves or grass clippings you have to it as well. You should now be set for a quick and shallow tilling the first warm, dry days of spring so you can plant.

### Planting Times

In the following tables there is a column devoted to "Planting Intervals." This column denotes the recommended planting dates for the various vegetables. Keep in mind that these are both recommendations and averages; in my experience these dates are actually rather flexible. In general you want all your cool season crops planted by mid-April so they can grow to maturity before dealing with the heat of late spring and summer when they will begin to fail. Cool season crops planted for the fall growing season may need to be planted later due to intense heat in August and sometimes September. Warm season vegetables may need to be started late due to cold or heavy rains, but you really need most of these in the ground no later than mid-July. You will also want to stagger your planting across the interval; adding a row or section every week or two in order to extend you harvest time and not overwhelm yourself with produce. As always, use your best judgment and experience to time planting.

### More Information

You can go to the Agricultural Extension office and its website for additional information. Google UT Extension in order to view publications or visit them on John Rice Blvd. in Murfreesboro.

Spring Planting, Cool Season Vegetables				
Vegetable	Planting Interval	Inches Between Plants	Days to Harvest	Length of Harvest
Beets	Mar. 1 – Mar. 10	2 – 3	55 – 60	4 weeks
*Broccoli	Mar. 1 – Mar. 10	15	60 – 70	4 weeks
*Cabbage	Feb. 20 – Apr. 1	15	60 – 75	3 weeks
*Cauliflower	Mar. 1 – Apr. 1	15	55 – 65	2 weeks
Carrots	Mar. 1 – Apr. 1	2 – 3	75 – 85	4 – 6 weeks
*Collards	Mar.	15	65 – 75	4 – 30 weeks
Kale	Feb.	12 – 15	55 – 65	4 – 20 weeks
Kohlrabi	Feb./Mar.	6	40 – 50	4 weeks
Lettuce, Head	Feb./Mar.	12 – 15	65 – 80	2 – 3 weeks
Lettuce, Leaf	Feb. – Apr.	6	40 – 50	4 – 6 weeks
Mustard	Feb.	5 – 10	35 – 45	3 – 6 weeks
Onions, Bunch	Feb./Mar.	2 – 3	30 – 60	3 weeks
Onions, Storage	Feb./Mar.	3 – 6	100 – 120	2 weeks
*Peas, English	Feb. 1 – Mar. 20	2 – 4	65 – 70	2 – 3 weeks
*Peas, Snap	Feb. 1 – Mar. 20	2 – 4	65 – 75	2 – 3 weeks
*Potatoes, Irish	Mar.	12	90 – 110	4 months stored
Radish	Feb. 15 – Apr. 15	1 – 2	25 – 30	3 weeks
Spinach	Feb.	3 – 4	40 – 50	3 weeks
Swiss Chard	Mar.	6 – 8	50 – 60	4 – 30 weeks
Turnip, Greens	Mar.	2 – 4	30 – 40	Several weeks
Turnip, Roots	Mar.	3	40 – 65	6 months

- Onions can be sowed as seed but are easier to deal with when placed as sets (starter onions).
- Cool Season crops should be planted by mid-April if by seed and no later than the middle of May when transplanting.
- You can extend this season by planning beds that will get spring sun but summer shade.

Summer Planting, Warm Season Vegetables				
Vegetable	Planting Interval	Inches Between Plants	Days to Harvest	Length of Harvest
Beans, Bush Snap	Apr. 10 – June 20	3 – 4	52 – 60	2 or more weeks
Beans, Pole Snap	Apr. 10 – June 20	3 – 4	60 – 65	5 – 6 weeks
Beans, Bush Lima	May or June	3 – 4	65 – 75	3 weeks
Beans, Pole Lima	May or June	3 – 4	80 – 90	3 weeks
Cantaloupe	May	24	80 – 90	3 weeks
Corn, Sweet	Apr. 1 – June 1	8 – 12	80 – 95	7 – 10 days
Corn, Super Sweet	Apr. 15 – June 1	8 – 12	80 – 95	10 – 15 days
Cucumber, Pickling	May	12	50 – 55	3 – 6 weeks
Cucumber, Slicing	May or June	12	50 – 65	3 – 6 weeks
Eggplant	May	24	65 – 80	2 or more weeks
Okra	May 5 – May 20	6 – 12	50 – 60	7 – 9 weeks
Peas, Field	May or June	4	65 – 80	3 – 5 weeks
Pepper, Sweet	May or June	18 – 24	55 – 80	2 – 3 months
*Pepper, Hot	May or June	18 – 24	60 – 70	2 – 3 months
*Potato, Sweet	May	12	110 – 120	5 months stored
Pumpkin	May	48	100 – 120	4 months stored
Squash, Summer	May or June	12 – 24	40 – 50	6 weeks
Squash, Winter	May or June	24 – 36	90 – 110	4 months stored
*Tomatoes	Apr. 10 – June 10	24	70 – 80	8 or more weeks
Watermelon	May	48	80 – 90	3 weeks

You can begin planting herbs during April.

Fall Planted, Cool and Late Warm Season Vegetables				
Vegetable	Planting Interval	Inches Between Plants	Days to Harvest	Length of Harvest
Beans, Bush Snap	July 15 – Aug. 15	3 – 4	52 – 60	2 or more weeks
Beets	Sept.	2 – 3	55 – 60	4 weeks
*Broccoli	July 15 – Aug. 15	18	60 – 70	4 weeks
*Cabbage	July 5 – Aug. 15	18	60 – 75	3 weeks
*Cabbage, Chinese	July 1 – July 30	12	40 – 50	4 weeks
*Cauliflower	July 15 – Aug 15	18	55 – 65	2 weeks
Carrots	Aug.	2 – 3	75 – 85	4 – 6 weeks
Collards	July 1 – Sept. 1	18	65 – 75	4 – 30 weeks
Cucumber, Pickling	July 1 – Aug. 1	12	50 – 55	3 – 6 weeks
Cucumber, Slicing	July 1 – Aug. 1	12	50 – 65	3 – 6 weeks
Garlic	Sept. – Oct.	6 – 12	Next Spring	Late March - May
Kale	July 1 – Sept. 1	12 – 15	55 – 65	4 – 20 weeks
Kohlrabi	July 15 – Sept. 1	6	40 – 50	4 weeks
*Lettuce, Head	Sept. 15 – Oct. 1	12 – 15	65 – 80	2 – 3 weeks
Lettuce, Leaf	July 1 – Sept. 15	6	40 – 50	4 – 6 weeks
Mustard	July 1 – Sept. 1	5 – 10	35 – 45	3 – 6 weeks
Onions, Bunch	Sept. – Oct.	2 – 3	30 – 60	3 weeks
Onions, Storage	Sept. – Oct.	3 – 6	100 – 120	2 weeks
*Peas, English	Sept.	2 – 4	65 – 70	2 – 3 weeks
*Peas, Snap	Sept.	2 – 4	65 – 75	2 – 3 weeks
*Potatoes, Irish	July 1 – July 31	12	90 – 110	4 months stored
Radish	Aug. 1 – Aug. 15	1 – 2	25 – 30	3 weeks
Spinach	Sept. 10 – Sept. 20	3 – 4	40 – 50	3 weeks
Squash, Summer	July 15 – Aug. 15	12 – 24	40 – 50	6 weeks
Swiss Chard	Sept.	6 – 8	50 – 60	4 – 30 weeks
*Tomatoes	July 1 – Aug. 1	24	70 – 80	8 or more weeks
Turnip, Greens	Aug. 1 – Sept. 30	2 – 4	30 – 40	Several weeks
Turnip, Roots	Aug. 1 – Sept. 15	3	40 – 65	6 months

- Some summers, broccoli should be set out between Aug. 15 – Sept.15.
- For tomatoes use quick maturing varieties (Early Girl is a favorite.)
- You can extend this growing season by using cold frames or a green house for cool season crops.