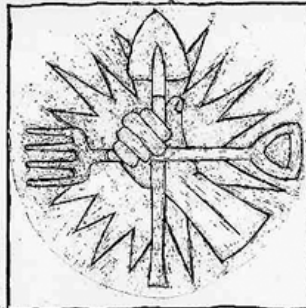


# A SOUTHERN WILLAMETTE VALLEY SEEDING CALENDAR (INCLUDING SEASON-EXTENSION)



Allowing for common sense, X's mark favorable seeding dates for gardeners not using supplementary heat & lighting, and providing satisfactory greenhouse/cold frame management, with additional frost protection (hooped blankets/ space heater) as demanded. H marks recommended use of supplementary heat.

Feedback & opinions, please.  
Nick Rantledge  
fellowsservant@yahoo.com  
541.284.3703

(v. 1.1)

## WHEN?

As the perspective broadens, the plot thickens. Consider pak choi, for example. We can plant it in January with supplemental heating & lighting, in a greenhouse in February, in the ground in March, and then continue seeding through the summer to a winter crop. But we might want to stop seeding May through June, because experience teaches us that pak choi has a tendency to bolt in the long days and heat of the hottest months of the year - though perhaps there's a variety that doesn't. In other words, there is no one right time to sow pak choi.

A unique profile, peculiar to each individual winter, holds true for every crop. And then, of course, there are other factors to consider - this year's weather, seed availability, moon cycles, your garden microclimate, the state of your back, your philosophy of life - to name a handful. As your own calendar evolves, here are some options to consider.

\* Spring seeding is for the pros, with two possible exceptions: alliums and salad greens. Asian greens, mustards, arugula, especially are strong germinators in cool soils. Plant out by early March, harvest by early April. The first, early crop. No supplemental heat needed.

\* February is the month that inexperienced gardeners tend to sow too early in. You will lose little and gain greatly, by waiting. However, if a dry, hot spell, very common in Feb/Mar hereabouts allows you to prepare ground and direct sow, for example, peas, do it. You might not get another window for 2-3 months. With appropriate resources, commitment & incentive, February is the month advanced gardeners get serious about season extension.

\* Seeds germinate at temperatures higher than plants need to grow. Most seeds do not need light to germinate. You can stack trays next to your woods stove and move them out once seedlings are up.

**ALLIUMS** Onions: don't start storage onions past the end of March. They need time to mature and dry down in the ground. Leeks are far more forgiving of slow than onions. Transition to winter varieties in April. Shallots: can store in your pantry until June. Sow earlier rather than later. Garlic: if you miss your fall sowing, sow in early spring.

**LEGUMES** Peas: by early April, sow erosion-resistant varieties. Fall sowing into hot days is a challenge. Green Beans: sow successions for a continuous harvest. Dry Beans: are direct sown, if really warm, in late April, but usually in late May. Early to mid-May is ideal. Plant beans of different varieties together in mid-May. Past late May, go with a buckskin.

**BRASSICAS** It is especially important to keep the momentum flowing smoothly for the 'heading brassicas' such as cauliflower, cabbage and broccoli - one reason why growing these plants successfully can prove challenging for the inexperienced gardener. If your transplants get stressed at any stage, cauliflower especially, compost them - they are likely to amount to little. Frigid weather conditions in the Spring can confuse the heading timing of these plants, too - another good reason to make succession sowings. Choose varieties specific to the seasons. Kale & Collards grow year round but taste better in the winter gardening season. Mizuna, arugula, mustards recut very well. Plant them a couple of times for a continual harvest.

**CUCURBITS** Winter squash, a critical component of a sustainable year-round diet, has a long cycle to maturity that makes it a marginal crop hereabouts. The head-start provided by a rowing up transplants in a greenhouse consistently makes the difference between a crop that matures and one which doesn't. If seeding past June 1, seed a v. early variety. Recently, commercially available delicate seed has proven difficult to germinate without rotting. You may need to re-sow. Try seeding an early batch of zukes, and Early prolific and Black Beauty summer squash in late March. Plant pumpkins like summer squash. Don't trust seed packet maturity dates for watermelons unless you are using lots of black plastic. Gourds: many of them have a difficult time maturing hereabouts. Cucurbits grow best in pots - one month from seed to transplant. Contrary to rumor, they are not difficult to transplant, unless they tend toward the root bound, in which case, compost them.

**NIGHTSHADES** Eggplants and peppers are the two summer crops that gardeners find most challenging to 'size up' - hence these crops respond well to season extension tools such as supplemental heat. Others are happy to seed in mid to late March, with much less in the way of overhead, but expect smaller plants. Cal Wonder and Ace Swirl are OP peppers that do well here.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	SUN	SUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
<b>ALLIUMS</b>											
Onions		X									
Leeks			X								
Scallions/G.onions		X									
Shallots		X									
Garlic	X									X	
<b>LEGUMES</b>											
Peas		X									
Green Beans					X						
Dry Beans					X						
Favas		X								X	
<b>BRASSICAS</b>											
Broccoli											
Cabbage											
Cauliflower											
Brussels Sprouts											
Kale							X				
Collards							X				
Redish											
Pac Choi											
Kohlrabi											
Turnips											
Rutabagas											
Arugula											
Asian Greens											
<b>CUCURBITS</b>											
Summer Squash											
Winter Squash				X							
Cucumbers											
Pumpkins				X							
Melons/Watermelons				X							
Gourds											
<b>NIGHTSHADES</b>											
Eggplants			HH	X							
Peppers			HH	X							
Tomatoes			X								
Tomatillos											
Potatoes											
<b>UMBELS</b>											
Carrots											
Parsley											
Dill											
Celery											
Parsnip				X							
Cilantro											
Fennel											
<b>COMPOSITES</b>											
Artichoke		X									
Lettuce											
Endive											
Chicory											
<b>OTHERS</b>											
Corn											
Basil											
<b>BEEF FAMILY</b>											
Beets											
Spinach											
Chard			X				X				
Ornch											

**Potatoes:** if soils aren't dry enough, potatoes will rot if planted too early. You can plant them well before last expected frost date however. Frosts will blast the foliage but the plants will usually bounce back with renewed vigor. March is perhaps the optimal month for seeding tomatoes, giving you two months to size up a plant while maintaining impetus. Jan/Feb sowings are possible, but you will need to keep potting up & protecting the plants, or have a greenhouse to plant them in. Too early seeded tomatoes tend to become leggy & stressed and more susceptible to disease.

**BEEF FAMILY** May-June sowings of chard are possible, but chard doesn't like the summer heat.

Switch to summer varieties of spinach at the beginning of May. **BASIL** Basil is a slow-growing plant taking about 6-8 weeks from seed to transplant. It does not like to be rootbound. A few plants go a long way. Most poorly performing basil has been planted out too early.

**SWEET CORN** can be started in cells in mid April for transplanting in mid-May. It is best in trays (3-4 weeks) so transplant out quickly. Earlier seeded corn has a tendency to bolt and produce lower yields. If direct seeding, mid-May is generally the earliest. There is great variety of flint, flour & dent, cobs, the staples, are much healthier than sweet corns.