



Vegetable Garden Planting Guide for San Diego County

This planting guide covers the county coastal and inland regions

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This guide is adapted from a publication by UC Farm Advisors Daniel Close and Bernard Hall. The planting dates reflect agricultural practices during the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's. Average temperatures are warmer now due to climate change but the guide is still a helpful tool for gardeners.

Most Vegetables Fall into Two Groups

Cool Season Crops

Fall - Winter Planting

They grow best when average temperatures are 55-75°F and usually tolerate slight frost when mature. Food value is generally higher per pound than in warm season crops.

We eat a vegetative part of the plant:

- Root – carrot, parsnip, beet, radish, turnip
- Stem – Kohlrabi, white potato
- Leaf – spinach, lettuce, celery, asparagus, cabbage, onion
- Immature flower parts – cauliflower, sprouting broccoli, globe artichoke

- Planting time should allow the crop to mature during the cool season.
- Root depth is shallow to medium.
- Storage is at a cooler temperature and for a longer period than for warm season crops.
- Store at 32°-42° F, except white potatoes (50°-60°F).

Plant vegetables in San Diego based on whether they are a warm or cool season crop.

Warm Season Crops

Spring - Summer Planting

They grow best when average temperatures are 65-95°F and they are intolerant to prolonged freezing temperatures. Food value is generally lower per pound than in cool season crops.

We eat the fruit of the plant:

- Mature fruit – tomato, watermelon, cantaloupe, winter squash
- Immature fruit – summer squash, cucumber, snap and lima beans, sweet corn

- Planting and harvesting time should be in the warm season.
- Root depth is medium to deep.
- Storage is at a warmer temperature and shorter period than for cool season crops.
- Store tomatoes, garlic, onions, and unripe melons at room temperature away from direct sunlight.
- Store peppers, cucumbers, ripe melons, snap beans, summer squash at 45°-55°F

Note: Two exceptions to the above classifications are peas (a fruit, yet a cool season crop) and sweet potatoes (a root and warm season crop).

Recommended Planting Dates

Warm Season Crop	Coastal (Region 1 & 2)	Inland
Beans, Snap	Mid Mar - Aug	Apr – Mid Aug
Beans, Lima	Mid Apr - Jul	Mid Apr - Jul
Cantaloupe	Apr – Jun	Apr – Jun
Corn, Sweet	Mid Mar – Jul	Apr – Jul
Cucumbers	Mid Mar – Jul	Apr – Jul
Eggplant (plants)	Apr – Jun	Apr – Jun
Melons (Casaba, etc)	Apr – Jun	Apr – Jun
Okra	Apr - Jun	Apr – Jun
Pepper (plants)	Apr - Jul	Apr - Jun
Squash, summer	Mid Mar - Aug	Apr – Jul
Squash, winter	Apr – Jun	Apr – Jun
Sweet Potato (plants)	Apr – Jun	May – Jun
Tomato (plants)	Mar – Jul	Apr – Jun
Watermelons	Apr – Jun	Apr – Jun

Timing Your Vegetable Garden

Planting periods for some common cool and warm season vegetables are given for a year having average weather conditions. The beginning and end of a planting period can vary by several weeks from year to year. Gardeners need to exercise more judgment when planting early or late in the season. Suitable planting dates are dictated to a large extent by the amount of time a vegetable takes to grow from seed to a harvestable size and by the vegetable's climatic requirements. Seed catalogs give the

Cool Season Crop	Coastal	Inland
Beets	Sept - May	Sept – Mid Apr
Broccoli (plants)	Sept - Feb	Sept – Feb
Broccoli (seeds)	Aug - Dec	Aug – Oct
Cabbage (plants)	Sept - Feb	Sept – Feb
Cabbage (seeds)	Aug - Dec	Aug – Oct
Carrots	Sept - Apr	Sept - Mar
Cauliflower (plants)	Sept - Feb	Sept – Feb
Cauliflower (seeds)	Aug - Dec	Aug – Oct
Chard	Sept - Jun	Sept – Apr
Endive	Sept - May	Sept – Apr
Kale	Sept - Apr	Sept – Apr
Kohlrabi	Sept - Mar	Sept – Mar
Head Lettuce	Sept - Mar	Sept – Feb
Leaf Lettuce	Sept - Apr	Sept – Mar
Onion (bulb) Short Day	Oct - Dec	Mid Oct – Dec
Onion (bulb) Medium Day	Jan - Feb	Jan – Feb
Onion (green)	Sept – May	Sept - Apr
Peas	Sept - Mar	Jan - Mar
Potatoes (Irish)	Feb – Mar Mid Aug – Sept	Mid Feb - Apr Mid Aug – Sept
Radish	Sept - May	Sept – Mar
Spinach	Sept - Apr	Sept – Mar
Turnips	Sept - May	Mid Sept – Apr

number of days required from seed to harvest under optimum growing conditions. The cold tolerance of some vegetables is listed below as a guide for early planting.

Hardy Vegetables: This group includes: cabbage plants (which have been well hardened), kale, kohlrabi, brussel sprouts, spinach, turnip, radish, asparagus, rhubarb and onion (from sets). These vegetables are not injured by light frosts and the seed will germinate at a rather low temperature.

Half-Hardy Vegetables: This group includes: lettuce, beet, carrot, chard, parsley, parsnip, heading broccoli, early potatoes, onion (from seed), garden peas, celery plants, and cauliflower plants. The seeds of these vegetables will germinate at rather low temperatures, but the young plants are injured by frost.

Tender Vegetables: This group includes: snap bean, tomato, sweet corn, and sweet potato. These vegetables are injured by the lightest frost and do not thrive at a low temperature even when frost does not occur. They should not be planted until all danger of frost is past.

Very Tender Vegetables: This group includes: eggplant, pepper, cucumber, watermelon, muskmelon, lima bean, squash, and pumpkin. These vegetables do not thrive until the soil has become warm. The seed will rot if the soil is not warm.

Bioclimate Region



Region		Subdivision
1	Coastal	Maritime
2	Inland	Hill & Mesa
3	Inland	Valley & Canyon
4	Inland	High Elevation

Approximate Area = Sea Level to 2000' Elevation Contour

Bioclimates are complexities of weather that differ from each other in some characteristic of importance to plants and animals.

Subdivisions of California's bioclimates are named for the geographic areas with which they are most closely associated. These names are used to designate the agricultural areas of the state.

Description of image: A black and white map of San Diego County. It shows a thin region 1 along the coast, running north to south, a wide region 2 in the center running north to south, some outlined pockets running west to east in the center labeled region 3, and a medium sized outlined area labeled region 4 on the east boundary of the map.