

**EDIBLE SCHOOL GARDENING**  
*Cool Season Planting in the Central Midwest*

### Cool Season Crops

These vegetables do not tolerate hot weather and grow best when the temperatures are 60-65 F. They can be divided into two groups:

**I. Very Hardy\***: tolerate hard frost w/o injury; plant as soon as ground can be broken; 4-6 weeks before average frost free date (plant late March); fall crop can be harvested through November

**II. Frost Tolerant\*\***: withstand light frosts; seeds can germinate in cool weather; plant 2-3 weeks before average frost free date (early to Mid-April); fall crop can be harvested through October

### BEST CHOICES

CROP	FAMILY	CULTIVAR	Soil Germination Temperature	Days to Harvest	Misc. Growing Information
<b>Arugula**</b>	Brassicaceae	Rocket	40-55	47	grow from seedlings in spring; blossoms edible; direct seed in late July for fall; may fail to germinate in warm soil; harvest individual leaves or whole plant; peak eating condition for short time
<b>Chard**</b>	Chenopodiaceae	Bright Lights	40-95	56	grow from seedlings in spring; cut and come; direct seed fall crop early August; frost improves flavor
<b>Kale*</b>	Brassicaceae	Spring: Lacinato Fall: Winterbor	45-75	62	grow from seedlings in early spring; cut and come; direct seed in late July for fall crop; flavor improves after first frost; high in minerals
<b>Lettuce*</b>	Compositae	Spring/Fall: Mesclun Mix Summer: Deer's Tongue Winter: Winter Lettuce Mix	low 40-50	42	transplant early April; direct seed in mid-April; cut and come; plant again in mid Aug.;. Note: Deer's Tongue can be grown through summer and has excellent flavor; lettuce seed does not keep well
<b>Spinach*</b>	Chenopodiaceae	Long Standing Bloomsday	40-55	42	grow from seed or seedlings in spring; cut and come; interplant in July for fall crop (may fail to germinate in warm soil); alternatively chill seeds in 'frig 1-2 weeks before early August planting
<b>Radish**</b>	Brassicaceae	Spring/Fall: Cherry Bell Easter Egg	45-85	25	direct seed in mid-April; require thinning to 2"; harvest at 1" in spring; direct seed in mid August for fall crop; fall crop matures slower; can grow to larger size- 2"

**Average Frost Free dates:** Spring/April 25-30; Fall/Oct. 15-20  
**Absolute frost free date:** Memorial Day

*Prepared by: Lynn Hyndman*  
*With thanks to Master Gardeners Nancy Benjamin & Matt Kostelnick*

**OTHER CHOICES** (*bold face numbers indicate germination temp; regular number, days to harvest*)

**Beets\*\*** Chenopodiaceae; Chioggia; Early Wonder Tall Top **45-70**; 55 ; don't do well when transplanted; thin to 3" apart by cutting all but one leaf off plant; beet greens are delicious; harvest beets when small - 2" diameter; succession planting every two weeks through summer until early August but important to mulch soil to keep cool

**Broccoli Raab\*\*** Brassicaceae; Quarantina, Sorrento **45-75**; 60; use transplants in spring; best as fall crop when you can direct seed; thin to 2" spacing to encourage stem thickness

**Carrots\*\*** Umbelliferae **60-70** 74 Purple Haze, Thumbelina, Atomic Red; direct seed in spring; thinning and soil preparation critical; warm soil by covering with plastic or row cover; vital to keep soil moist until germination; can take 3 weeks to germinate; like phosphorus; cover with dusting of vermiculite; mix seed with sand to sow; direct seed fall crop plant mid July.

**Collards\*\*** Brassicaceae; **55-75** 60; direct seed as seedlings don't transplant well; thin to 12"; cut and come; direct seed in mid-July for fall crop and to avoid flea beetles; mulch to keep soil moist

**Kohlrabi\*** Brassicaceae; Kolibri ; **55-75**; 45 ; transplants can go outside when temps are above 30; can tolerate heat better than most cool season; harvest when small; cooked leaves are edible; fall planting in mid July;

**Mustard Greens\*** Brassicaceae; Green Wave; **45-85**; 45; plant seedlings in early spring and succession planting through summer and into fall; fall crop usually best

**Peas\*** Fabiaceae; Coral Shell, Dwarf Grey Sugar; **40-85**; 59; soil must be dry; use inoculant; can be slow to germinate if soil temp is cool; fall planting in early August; taller varieties need support system for vining

**Potato\*\*** Solanaceae Fingerling, Yukon Gold; **45 +**; 60; bury a small organic potato with at least 2 eyes; alternatively cut organic fingerlings into 2" pieces but must have eyes; soil must be dry and warm for planting; dig shallow trenches 3" deep, 1 foot wide; when plants are 2" high, top with compost and straw covering 2/3 of plants; continue to mound with straw as plants mature; harvest when foliage dies back; plant a fall crop in mid-July; probably safest to buy "seed" potatoes for planting

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