

## MID-JUNE-JULY FOR NEW VEGETABLE GARDENERS

### Mid-June thru mid-July

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**PLANTING, PLANTING, PLANTING!** Everyone wants to finish getting their vegetables in right now and I always feel behind this time of year when everything is going in but as a new gardener, and even an old gardener like me, don't bite off more than you can chew.

I need to mention again that the best thing a new gardener or any gardener can do is after creating a bed, (preferably raised) or even digging in the ground, should spend the time enriching the soil by adding compost or soil conditioners. Brand new beds can be heavily amended by adding at least 4 inches or more of compost and digging in. Older beds need 2-4 inches lightly dug in will help soil. The key to success with gardening is to grow in good soil. I cannot stress this enough. Healthy soil makes healthy plants. Every crop you plant should go in soil that has been amended and enriched. Even a shovelful in every hole where you transplant is helpful if you haven't amended the whole bed. By getting in the habit of amending the soil in spring, you will have less work to do now when you are planting.

New gardeners should not plant bigger gardens or grow more than they can use. If they grow too much it is easy to get overwhelmed and give up. Better to start small and be successful.

**The moment we've all been waiting for or at least for me! Tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants**-transplants should be in the ground by now. If you haven't planted these, do so right away so you have time to harvest before the season ends in the fall. This is especially true about tomatoes.

I took my tomatoes out of their wall of waters this week and covered them with a fabric called row cover that I put around their cages. They will either need cages or big stakes to help control the tomatoes, as they get big. The row cover is because a bug called the beet leafhopper can bite the plant and give it a fatal virus called Curly top Virus. Physical protection is the only way to keep the leafhopper away. You will hear me talk about this during June and even into July. But once the monsoons come, I find they leave and I uncover them.

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**Many vegetables will now grow and produce quickly from seeds planted in early summer when the soil is warm.**

**Still not too late to plant the following crops by seeds:**

**Beans- mid June-Mid July**

Beans are great for a June planting. Fast growing in warm soil will give you a crop in as little as 35 days with some varieties. Look on package to see how many days to harvest

Plant both pole beans and bush beans. Pole beans need a trellis or fence to grow on hence the name and bush beans can be planted close together and don't need support. For a continuous crop of bush beans, plant every two weeks.

Suggested Varieties: *Kentucky Wonder (pole)*, *Contender (bush)*

**Beets-mid June-Mid July**

Sow beets now for a mid to late-summer harvest

Suggested Varieties: *Detroit Red*, *Chiogga*, *Touchstone Gold*

**Carrots-mid June-Mid July**

Planting carrots by mid-June yields a late summer crop that will keep in the garden until it freezes and that goes for beets as well.

Suggested variety: *Scarlet Nantes*. Try something different like *Atomic Red* or *Cosmic Purple*. There are actually many colors of carrots out there.

**Corn- plant now in June**

Corn is a fast growing crop once it germinates. Follow package directions as to spacing but plant in a block of at least 3 rows for better pollination. After planting seeds, cover with row cover until baby corn are 3 inches tall to keep birds from eating the seedlings and then take it off. This goes for beans as well.

**Cucumbers-mostly in June**

Fast growing vine or bush cucumber plants can produce a lot of cucumber fruits throughout summer unless we get too hot. Be careful to pick a variety for the space you have in your garden. Vine cucumbers will need more space than bush varieties. Grow vining varieties up a fence or trellis. A popular variety here is *Lemon Cucumber* which is never bitter.

### **Melons-plant in June**

I don't eat a lot of melons but if you do, you need to get the seeds in the ground now as they take a while. Melons need heat and sun to produce good melons. Get an extra early (70 days to harvest) variety like *Blacktail Mountain watermelon*.

### **Summer Squash- mid June-Mid July**

Summer squash sowing in June an early July will lead to fresh squash and zucchini in July and August. I keep mine covered with row cover until I see the flowers. Then I uncover them so the bees can pollinate them. They need a pollinator to produce the fruit. You can even plant a little later to be less exposed to squash bugs.

Suggested Varieties: *Cocozelle, Bennings Green Tint, Costata Romanesco*.

### **Winter Squash-plant in June**

Winter squash can still be grown here but hurry, as many varieties need a long season. Pick varieties that have a shorter harvest like *Waltham Butternut*. A benefit of butternut squash is it doesn't attract squash bugs.

### **Kale-plant again in mid July**

Planting kale mid-July through mid-August will yield an excellent harvest into fall and winter.

Suggested variety: Scotch Blue and Vates Curly, Toscano and Russian Red.

### **The following will be done if not already.**

**Peas-finish harvesting them before the plants die out. It has been the best pea season for me in a long time. I planted on St. Patricks Day in March.**

Green peas and sugar peas are finishing up with the summer heat. You can replant them later in the fall again.

**Lettuce**-Most lettuce will bolt (flower) with our heat-although there are heat tolerant lettuces; new gardeners might not bother with them until the fall when they are easier to grow.

**Spinach**- Only *New Zealand Spinach* will grow now. If you like traditional spinach, wait till fall to plant again.