

PLANTING AND HARVESTING CALENDAR FOR GARDENERS IN YUMA COUNTY

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Yuma is known as the Winter Salad Bowl of the nation, producing over 90% of the winter leafy greens and vegetables consumed in the United States. Between the months of November and March, Yuma is the epicenter of US production of salad greens. This is great news for home gardeners! When gardeners in northern climates begin storing their gardening tools for the winter, gardeners in Yuma are just getting started.

There are two distinct growing seasons in Yuma. The first, extending from September through February, when the sun is low and the days are short, is ideal for growing cool season crops. The second growing season, extending from March through August, when the sun is higher in the sky and days are longer is ideal for growing warm season crops. The cool season is best for growing non-fruiting plants such as lettuce, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage. These crops thrive during cool weather and can survive the occasional light frost that occurs in Yuma. The warm season is the best time to grow fruiting crops such as tomatoes, squash, melons and peppers, which can handle the warmer spring temperatures.

If shaded and watered properly they can last into the summer. These distinctly different growing seasons result in two relatively short, production periods. This makes it even more important to choose plants that can be harvested in less than 90 days and to plant at the correct time. This ensures harvest before the end of the growing season, which is mainly determined by rising temperatures.

In addition to plant selection and timing of planting, successful gardening in Yuma also requires planning and preparation to effectively manage soil pH, salinity and pests. Yuma soil can be a challenge for gardeners due to its alkalinity and salinity. In most parts of the United States, soil acidity is common and amending garden beds with lime is routine. For this reason, new residents moving to Yuma from northern regions expect to apply lime when preparing garden beds. However, Yuma's soil can have a pH level of 8 or 9. Since most plants absorb the optimal amount of nutrients and grow best at a pH of 7, adding lime to the soil makes it more alkaline and limits availability of nutrients for plants. Soil tests can

be performed to determine your soils pH. If it's found to be high, this can be remedied by amending the soil with sulfur. Application of granular sulfur compounds lowers soil pH, as it produces sulfuric acid in the presence of water, which then acidifies the soil and lowers the pH closer to 7. If ammonium sulfate is used, not only will soil pH be reduced, but nitrogen levels increase also.

Another challenge for Yuma gardens is high soil salinity. The water we use to irrigate our gardens can be saline. When irrigation water evaporates or is taken up by plants, it leaves salts behind. Accumulations of salts in the soil, can lead to plant decline and even death. Drip irrigation systems cause the greatest accumulation of salts because the small amount of water supplied during each irrigation event concentrates salts in the soil where plant roots grow. For this reason, the best way to reduce this build up is to wash the salts out of the root zone with a long slow leaching with water. This is accomplished by running your hose on a trickle for a long period of time, flooding the area. Doing this twice a year should reduce the salinity level to an acceptable level.

Finally, as with all gardens, pests are an issue here in Yuma also. Mild winters and hot summers create an ideal climate for survival of many insect, disease and weed species. Out of all the pests, insects are probably the easiest to manage because there are many options for control, both organic and non-organic. Diseases and weeds are a different story. Most people think that diseases can be managed like an insect pest. Unfortunately, this is not the case; diseases in plants are like diseases in humans. Once a plant has contracted a disease, it lives with it for the rest of its life. The best solution in this case is prevention. Select plants that are resistant to diseases

such as Verticillium and Fusarium wilt disease, especially for crops such as tomatoes, peppers and chiles. Weeds, like insects, can be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, but there are limited organic controls for them. Please contact the Yuma County Cooperative Extension office for more information.

How to use this Calendar

This calendar is intended to guide Yuma gardeners in plant selection, timing and cultivation. To use this calendar, find the crop you want to grow in the first column, which is in alphabetical order. The columns to the right, will tell you everything you need to know about when to plant and harvest, seed depth, row width, and space between plants. In the column labeled planting depth, some of the crops have two numbers, for example 1 to 2 inches. The depth depends on soil texture, in heavy soils go with the smallest number. In lighter soils, go with the bigger number. This calendar has been made for seeds unless otherwise noted, but transplants can also be planted during these time periods. The calendar suggests planting in September for some cool season crops. For most gardeners we suggest waiting until October when the weather cools down. Gardeners who provide shade and enough irrigation can start in September, but it will take extra care to keep germinating plants alive during the extremely warm days

References:

- Ten Steps to Successful Vegetable Gardening-
<http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/az1435.pdf>
- Vegetable Planting Calendar for Maricopa County-
<http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/az1005.pdf>

Herbs

Crop (seeded unless noted)	Planting Window	Harvest Window	Planting Depth (in)	Row Width (in)	Plant Spacing (in)
Basil	Year round	Year round	1/2	30	4
Cilantro	September-December	January-April	1/4	30	1-2
Dill	October-February	February-March	1/2	30	6
Oregano	October-February	December-April	1	30	4
Parsley	September-January	December-March	1/8	30	6
Sage	November-December	March-April	1/2	30	6
Savory	November-December	March-April	1/2	30	6
Sorrel	November-December	March-April	1/2	30	6
Spearmint	November-December	March-April	1/2	30	6
Tarragon	November-December	March-April	1/2	30	6
Thyme	November-December	March-April	1/2	30	6

Veggies

Crop (seeded unless noted)	Planting Window	Harvest Window	Planting Depth (in)	Row Width (in)	Plant Spacing (in)
Asparagus	October-February	March-April	8	4 to 6	20 to 24
Artichoke	September-October	May-June	1 to 2	32 to 40	24
Beans (Dry)	March-April	June	1	30	6
Beans (Green)	March-April	May-June	1/2 to 1	30	3-4
Beets	October-February	December-April	1	30	4
Bok Choy	September-January	January-April	1/4	30	10
Broccoli and Broccolini	September-January	January-April	1/4	36	6
Broccoli	September-December	December-April	1/2	36	10 to 12
Brussel Sprouts	September-December	January-March	1/4 to 1/2	36	18 to 20
Cabbage	September-January	December-March	1/8	30	10 to 12
Carrot	September-December	January-April	1/8	20	1-2
Cauliflower	September-December	December-April	3	36	10 to 12
Celery (transplant)	September	February-March	3	30	10
Chard	September-January	December-March	1/8	30	10 to 12
Corn	February-March	May-June	2	30 to 40	10
Cucumber	September & Feb.-Mar.	Nov. & May-July	1	5 to 6	6 to 10
Eggplant	February-March	April-June	1/2	30 to 40	10
Fennel	September-November	January-April	1	36	8
Garlic	March-May	September-November	1 to 2	12	3
Kale	September-December	December-April	1/4	30	6 to 10
Leek (transplants)	September-November	February-March	3	30	6
Lettuce (Baby Leaf)	October-February	October-March	1/8	12 to 14	1/2
Lettuce (Romaine, Head, Leaf)	September-January	December-March	1/8	18	10 to 12
Melons (Cantaloupe, Honeydew, Watermelon)	February-March	May-June	1 to 2	8	6 to 10
Okra	February-March	May-June	1	30 to 40	12 to 18
Onion (Bulb)	September	April	1/2	30	4
Onion (Green)	September-November	January-April	1/4	30	1
Peas	November-December	February-March	1	15 to 18	4
Peas (Black Eyed Peas)	April-May	July-August	2	30	4
Peanuts	March-April	October-November	1 to 2	40	8-10
Peppers/Chiles	September & Feb.-Mar.	Nov. & May-July	1/2	36	6 to 10
Potatoes	November-December	April-May	6	30 to 40	12
Radish	September-February	November-April	1/2	30	1
Spinach	September-February	November-April	1/8	20	3
Squash (Summer and Winter)	February-March	May-June	1	40 to 48	12
Tomato	February-March	May-July	1/4	5	10 to 12
Turnip Greens	October-February	January-April	1/4	30	6



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cals.arizona.edu/pubs/gardening/az1615.pdf

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jeffrey C. Silvertooth, Associate Dean & Director, Extension & Economic Development, College of Agriculture Life Sciences, The University of Arizona.

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