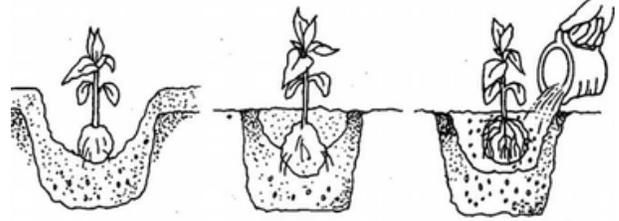


GARDEN RESOURCE PROGRAM

2024 Hot Crop Transplant Instructions

What are hot crops?

Hot weather crops are plants that enjoy long, hot summer days. If there is a threat of freezing temperatures, cover your hot crops temporarily with plastic or row cover. Follow these steps for proper care and planting of your hot crop transplants.



1. Harden off your transplants

"Hardening off" is the process of letting your plants slowly get accustomed to the outdoors after being gently cared for in the greenhouse. To harden off your transplants, slowly expose your plants to the outdoors, setting them outside for a few hours on the first day and then bringing them back inside. On the second and third day, leave them out for an entire afternoon. For a few days after that, leave them out all day long, bringing them back inside or covering them with row cover each evening. They should be ready to plant after 5-7 days. Because the weather in spring is so variable, there is no exact schedule you need to follow.

Check for aphids

Aphids overwinter as small black egg on stems and leaves of mature Brassica (cabbage family) plants. Check your plants regularly for these pests. Look at the undersides of leaves and near the growth point of your plants. When you find them, you will want to act quickly. Try crushing them by hand, spraying plants with diluted soapy water, blasting off aphids with water hose, and/or removing infested leaves on larger plants and infested plants entirely.

2. Plant your transplants

It's best to choose an overcast day for planting. Choose a location where your plants will get 8-10 hours of sunlight a day. Before planting, loosen the soil of the area you are planting with a shovel. Then, make a small hole about the same size and shape as the soil bottom of the transplant. Carefully take plant out of its plastic tray, place it in the hole, and gently firm in the soil around it. Do not plant deeper than the existing soil level of the transplant. See transplant varieties below for spacing instructions. Plants that are placed too closely together tend to be stunted and prone to problems with pests and diseases.

3. Water your transplants

Water immediately after transplanting. Apply a generous amount of water to the soil just around the base of the plant. To ensure that you have watered enough, water the plant until you see the water glisten at the top of the soil, water the next plant the same way, go back to the first plant and re-water, then repeat for the second, and so on. As they establish themselves in the soil, check your plants daily to ensure that they do not dry out. If they look dry/thirsty, water them using the instructions detailed above.



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2024 HOT CROP TRANSPLANT VARIETIES

BASIL

Variety: 'Genovese' is a heavy yielding basil variety, great for fresh or dry use.

Spacing: 8-10 inches between plants.

Growing tips: 30 days to harvest. Pinch off flowers as they form to avoid bitter leaf flavor and to encourage continual production. Keep the leaves dry by watering close to the ground in order to discourage fungus and disease. Air circulation will also help prevent disease. Harvest branches from the bushiest areas of the plant first.



EGGPLANT

Varieties: 'Black beauty' is a classic Italian variety. 'Ping-Tung long' is a prolific Taiwan Asian eggplant variety that produces 12-16 inch long glossy purple-red fruit with green calyx.

Spacing: 18 inches between plants.

Growing tips: 'Black beauty' 74 days to harvest; 'Ping-Tung long' 65 days. Harvest 1-2 times per week in order to encourage plants to keep producing. Harvest when fruits are dark and shiny. Yellowing skin or dulling of the fruit means that it is overripe and the seeds will be well-formed, making them slightly less delicious to eat. Use clippers or scissors to cleanly cut the stem when you harvest.

GROUND CHERRY

Variety: 'Goldie' is a conversation piece at markets and well liked by children. This old-fashioned tomato family member bears ½- ¾ inch sweet golden berries inside papery husks, resembling small, straw-colored Japanese lanterns. The flavor is quite sweet.

Spacing: 18-24 inches between plants.

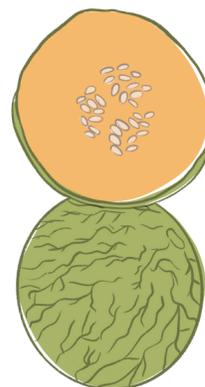
Growing tips: 75 days to harvest. Plants are profusely branching, prolific, and drop ripe fruits. Fruits can be eaten raw, dried like raisins, frozen, canned, or made into preserves, cooked pies, and desserts. Try growing in a hanging basket for easy harvesting.

MELON

Variety: 'Charentais superprécoce du Roc' is a green striped fruit have a heavenly aroma and deliciously sweet, firm orange flesh. It is also a traditional French type of cantaloupe that has long been considered by many to be the best of the best.

Spacing: 18 inches between plants.

Growing tips: 70-80 days to harvest. Cut the fruit from the vine after the tendril closest to the fruit dries out and turns brown. This is before the stem slips from the fruit and when the green skin just starts to lighten with a hint of yellow.



PARSLEY

Variety: 'Giant of Italy' is the preferred variety for cooking. Huge, dark green leaves with great flavor. Strong, upright stems make 'Giant of Italy' one of the best parsley varieties for fresh-market sales.

Spacing: 8-12 inches between plants.

Growing tips: 75 days to harvest. Harvest stems from the outside of the plant and allow the small leaves in the center to continue growing. Parsley can be used either fresh or dried. To dry, wash clipped leaves and spread out shallowly on screens in a warm, airy place. When thoroughly dry, rub and store in jars.

HOT PEPPERS

Varieties: Cayenne 'Long Slim Pepper' is a very hot pepper that registers 30,000 - 50,000 units on the Scoville scale. It is one of the best known hot chili peppers. Jalapeño 'M' has blunt, thick-walled fruits turn shiny, brick red with the characteristic checking.

Spacing: 12 inches between plants.

Growing tips: Cayenne 'Long Slim Pepper' 70-75 days to harvest; 73 days green, 93 days red. Jalapeño 'M' is often harvested and used green or, just like other peppers, they will redden if you let them stay on the plant until maturity. When fruit gets to mature size, harvest 1-3 times per week in order to encourage the plant to keep producing peppers. Avoid touching your face or eyes after harvesting hot peppers because they contain oils that can irritate skin. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap to remove oils. Support peppers with stake if they lean.

SWEET PEPPERS

Varieties: Bell pepper 'Yolo Wonder' is highly productive in cool climates with 3-4 lobe peppers that turn red early. Roasting pepper's 'Corno Di Toro' name translates into "horn of the bull" which describes its long tapered shape. Crisp peppers are sweet and flavorful, delicious raw, stuffed, or grilled.

Spacing: 18 inches between plants

Growing tips: 'Yolo Wonder' 50 days to green, 70 days to red; 'Corno Di Toro' 75 days to ripe. When fruit gets to mature size, harvest 1-3 times per week to encourage the plant to keep producing peppers. Sweet peppers can be eaten green but will be sweetest when red. Support peppers with stake if they lean.

STEVIA

Variety: Typically characterized by small, white flowers and sweet, green leaves used as a natural sweetener.

Spacing: Plant seeds or seedlings about 18 inches apart to ensure adequate air circulation and room for growth.

Growing Tips: Stevia prefers warm temperatures and plenty of sunlight. It thrives in rich, well-drained soil. Water regularly to keep the soil moist but not soggy. Harvest leaves before flowering for the sweetest taste. Pinch off flowers to encourage leaf production. In colder climates, grow stevia in a pot to move indoors during winter.

CHERRY TOMATOES

Varieties: 'Black cherry' tomatoes are vigorous plants, producing tons of dusky dark colored cherry tomatoes with a dynamic and rich flavor that make a statement in salads and kabobs. 'Sungold' tomatoes are bright, tangerine colored with an exceptionally sweet flavor. Early and steady yield.

Spacing: 24–36 inches between plants.

Growing tips: 'Black cherry' 75 days to harvest; 'Sungold' 57 days to harvest. All tomato varieties are indeterminate, meaning they will produce fruit all season long until frost and require staking or caging. Over watering can cause tomatoes to crack. Inconsistent watering can lead to blossom end rot, which looks like sunken dark spots on the underside of tomatoes. Two waterings a week should strike a good balance. Discourage fungus and disease by watering directly on to the ground.

PASTE TOMATO

Variety: 'Amish paste' is a small Roma paste tomato. Excellent for both cooking and canning.

Spacing: 24–36 inches between plants.

Growing tips: 76 days to harvest. See cherry tomatoes for additional tips.

SLICING TOMATOES

Varieties: 'Big beef' is a classic red tomato. Nice size, taste, and earliness. Great for slicing. 'Cherokee purple' is an old heirloom variety with dark red/purple color and large, sweet flavor. 'Green zebra' is a delicious, tangy, salad tomato, ripe just as the green fruit develops a yellow blush, accentuating the darker green stripes.

Spacing: 24–36 inches between plants.

Growing tips: 'Big beef' 70 days to harvest; 'Cherokee purple' & 'Green zebra' 72 days. See cherry tomatoes for additional tips.



WATERMELON

Variety: 'Sugar baby' is an excellent short-season variety with reliable yields of sweet, juicy melons. The standard for small watermelons.

Spacing: When the weather is frost-free, warm, and settled, transplant 24–36 inches apart in rows 6–8 feet apart.

Growing tips: 76 days to harvest. Even hardened watermelon seedlings are tender. Do not disturb roots when transplanting, and water thoroughly. Melons need plenty of air circulation and sun, especially in the morning, to prevent fungal disease. To harvest, gently pull on the stem, where it meets the fruit. If it is ripe it should pop off easily. If it resists, let it stay on the vine a little longer. Check the spot where it rests on the ground to make sure that it doesn't rot. Prop the melon up off the ground if it is looking too wet.

GARDEN RESOURCE PROGRAM

2024 Hot Crop Seed Instructions

Prepare a proper seed bed

Make sure the soil is free of weeds that could compete with slower growing vegetables. Loosen the soil, remove any rocks, and use a rake to make it as smooth as possible. This ensures that all seeds are at the same depth, makes it easier to water evenly, and provides a smooth seed bed for consistent seed germination.



Maintain good moisture

Check the seeds daily to make sure they are getting enough water, but be aware that seeds do not need to be wet constantly. Watering in the morning is better than evening to avoid fungal issues. Once plants have germinated keep a consistent watering schedule. One thorough watering per week is a good rule of thumb: this will provide enough water to keep the soil moist approximately 4 to 6 inches deep.

Don't give up!

Some crops can take a long time to germinate. Carrots are infamous for taking as long as three weeks. Don't give up and replant too soon! If you have done everything else right, it is often just a matter of waiting.

Thin crops that need to be thinned

Plants need room to grow! For some plants it is a good idea to plant too many seeds in case not all of them germinate. When they are baby-sized, the extras need to be removed, or "thinned", so that the others have room to mature. Gardeners are often reluctant to thin crops because they cannot stand killing their little babies, but if you do not thin them they all suffer.



Rotate crops

Moving crops to different places in your garden each year helps to keep insects and disease at bay and soil from being stripped of its nutrients. Crops should be rotated along with other crops in their family.



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HOT CROP SEED VARIETIES

BUSH BEANS

Variety: 'Provider' has smaller pods that don't need support of a trellis. Yields a lot of beans all at once. Only plant them after all danger of frost has passed. For continuous yield plant new area every 2 weeks until mid-July.

Spacing: Sow 1 seed every 3 inches, 1 inch deep, in rows 18 inches apart.

Growing tips: 50 days to maturity. Continuously harvest beans to encourage them to continue producing pods. Avoid pest problems by rotating where you plant beans from year to year. Can be harvested young as green beans, when pods are tender and swollen, OR as dry beans when seeds have fully formed, and pods are dry and withered.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Variety: 'Waltham' is a standard butternut squash, an average of 9 inches long and 4-5 pounds. Average yield is 4-5 fruits per plant.

Spacing: Sow 2-3 seeds every 18 inches, ½ inch deep in 6 inch hills. Thin to one plant every 18 inches. Use a knife to thin the plants you don't want to avoid disturbing the roots of the plant you want. Winter squash take up a lot of space; give them plenty of room or train them up a sturdy trellis.

Growing tips: 105 days to harvest. Harvest fruits before heavy frost, cutting stems about inch from the fruit. Winter squash and pumpkins taste sweeter after a light frost. Handle gently, as any cut can bring rot which will reduce storage time. Winter squash and pumpkins taste best when they have been stored/"cured" for a couple of months.

CALENDULA

Variety: 'Pacific beauty mix' is known for its large, colorful blooms in shades of orange and yellow.

Spacing: Plant seeds or seedlings about 6-8 inches apart to allow for full growth and adequate air circulation.

Growing Tips: This variety flowers early and continues through the cooler months if deadheaded regularly. Prefers full sun to partial shade and well-drained soil. Water moderately, ensuring the soil is moist but not waterlogged. Fertilize lightly to promote vibrant blooms.

COSMOS

Variety: 'Tall mix' features a vibrant mix of colors, with tall, elegant stems.

Spacing: Plant seeds or seedlings about 12 inches apart to give each plant enough space to mature and spread.

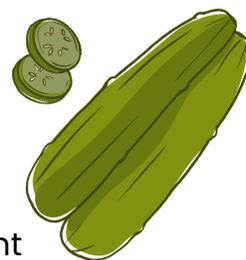
Growing Tips: This variety typically blooms from mid-summer to fall. Thrives in full sun and well-drained soil. Water regularly but avoid overwatering. Deadhead spent flowers to encourage continuous blooming. Staking may be necessary for support due to the tall height.

CUCUMBER

Varieties: 'Marketmore 76' has long been the standard for slicing cucumbers. 'Mexican sour gherkin' produces cute, 1 inch long fruits that look like miniature watermelons and taste like cucumbers with tangy citrus overtones. 'National pickling' has short, vigorous pickling cucumber.

Spacing: Sow 2 seeds every 12 inches, ½ inch deep. Thin to 1 plant every 12 inches. Use scissors to thin the plants you don't want to avoid disturbing the roots of the plant you'll keep. Give each row at least 12 inches on either side for the vine to spread, or trellis the vines.

Growing tips: 'Marketmore 76' 58 days to maturity; 'Mexican sour gherkin' 70 days to maturity; 'National pickling' 52 days to maturity. Pick fruits every couple of days after they start bearing to keep a steady crop and to keep fruits from becoming over-mature. Over-mature cucumbers are yellowish with well-formed seeds that aren't as tasty.



MARIGOLD

Variety: 'Crackerjack mix' has big double blooms that come in shades of lemon yellow to deep orange.

Spacing: Sow 1 seed every 6 inches, ½ inch deep. Thin or transplant to 1 plant every 12 inches.

Growing tips: 80 days to maturity. Clip off faded and dead flower heads to keep plant flowering regularly.



OATS

Variety: 'Streaker' is quick germinating and adaptable to various soils.

Spacing: Sow seeds about 1 inch apart in rows, covering them with ½ inch of soil. Thin or space out to about 2-3 inches between plants for optimal growth.

Growing tips: Oats typically reach maturity in about 50-60 days. They prefer cooler temperatures and moist, well-drained soil. Keep the area weed-free and water regularly, especially during dry spells. Harvest when the grains are firm and the stalks have turned golden brown.

OKRA

Variety: 'Burgundy' has beautiful deep red pods and stems that contrast nicely with green leaves, making them both ornamental and tasty.

Spacing: Sow 2 seeds every 6 inches, 1 inch deep. Thin to 1 plant every 18-24 inches.

Growing tips: 55 days to maturity. Harvest regularly when fruit is 3 inches long to keep plants producing and for best flavor. Okra is excellent fried or used in soups, stews and relishes.



POLE BEANS

Variety: 'Kentucky wonder' is a vigorous, rust resistant variety that is adaptable to the many parts of the country. Produces plenty of 8-9in pods.

Spacing: Sow 2-3 seeds every 2-3 inches, 1 inch deep.

Growing tips: 50-80 days to maturity. Use a trellis or a pole to support their upright growth habit by placing it just next to where the seed is planted.

SUMMER SQUASH

VARIETIES: Yellow squash 'Saffron' is a prolific, sweet and tender variety. Less warty than straight-neck squashes. Keep picking and they'll keep coming all season. Zucchini 'Black beauty' is a classic zucchini with very dark green skin and creamy white flesh. These fast-growing plants are very easy to grow and will continue to produce abundantly through summer.



SPACING: Sow 2 seeds every 18 inches, ½ inch deep. Thin to 1 plant every 18 inches.

GROWING TIPS: 'Saffron' 42 days to maturity; 'Black beauty' 50-60 days to maturity. For best flavor pick summer squash when they are small unless you want to stuff them. Don't leave oversized squash on the vines. It shuts down production. Squash blossoms are a delicacy. Harvest male blossoms when fully open for salads or stuffing. Male blossoms typically precede females by about a week. Females have a bulge at the base of the blossom, an early stage of the fruit forming.

SUNFLOWER

VARIETIES: 'Autumn beauty mix' features diverse colors on tall stems; 'Mexican sunflower' *Tithonia rotundifolia* has large, vivid blooms on a bushy plant.

SPACING: Sow 3 seeds every 6-12 inches, 1-2 inches deep. Thin to 1 plant every 12 inches.

GROWING TIPS: Flowers mature in 60-80 days. For cut flowers from the 'Autumn beauty mix', harvest with long stems and place in clean water in a cool, dark place. Change water daily and recut stems as necessary. 'Mexican sunflower' does well as a garden plant, attracting pollinators with its bushy growth and large blooms.



THREE SISTERS

Variety: 'Blue mountain' flint corn is a short efficient native-type plant. It produces long, narrow 8-rowed ears which dry quickly in a short growing season. 'Multicolored' pole beans combined green, yellow, purple and striped varieties of staggered maturity into one packet. 'Blue Hubbard' winter squash is a spectacular storage squash, the famously long-lasting Hubbard squash arrived in Marblehead, Massachusetts in 1854 in the holds of a ship from the West Indies.

Spacing: Plant 3–4" apart

Growing Tips: 'Blue mountain' flint corn, 100 days to harvest. Stalks can reach up to 8 feet tall, ideal for providing shade for lower-growing companion plants. For best results, harvest the corn when the husks are thick and the silks have dried out for optimal flavor and texture. 'Multicolored' pole beans, 65 days to harvest. Vines typically grow 6–9 feet tall and require a trellis or support for climbing. Harvest beans when they are firm and fully colored but before the pods bulge, indicating the seeds inside are still tender. 'Blue Hubbard' winter squash, 110 days to harvest. Plants sprawl extensively, needing ample space to grow, approximately 6 feet in all directions. Harvest squash when the rind is hard and has a deep, solid color to ensure the flesh is sweet and well-textured.

ZINNIA

Variety: 'Golden medal mix' is good for cutting with a beautiful mix of colorful, ruffled flowers.

Spacing: Sow 1 seed every 3 inches, ½ inch deep.

Thin to 1 plant every 9 inches.

Growing tips: 80 days to harvest. Plants should grow 3–4 feet tall. Blooms will last the longest on your table if you harvest when blossoms are about half open.



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ONIONS & POTATOES

ONIONS

Varieties: 'Red zeppelin' (F1) A sweet, reliable, dark red variety with a 4 inch bulb.

Planting: Keep roots wrapped in a moist paper towel in the refrigerator until you are ready to plant. Plant onions about 1 inch deep and leave 6 inches between each onion plant. Be sure to water thoroughly after planting and at least one time per week after planting.

Growing tips: 110 days to harvest. Thrips are very small insects and can be a problem pest on onions. Look for them at the base of the succulent inner leaves. Their bites can let in rain which will rot the onion layers. If they become a problem, consider an organic pesticide, or try setting mirrors or aluminum foil facing up under your plants. The intense reflected sunlight can confuse the pests. Fresh, green onions can be harvested as soon as bulbs reach desired size. For storage/dry-skinned onions, watch for when the outer-most ring of leaves dies and harvest when leaves have fallen over. Lay out to dry in single layers or hang them in a warm, dry place with good air circulation. Let onions dry at least 2-3 weeks. Clip or pull tops off the plants after fully dried. Watch out for any rotten onions - if left to fester, they smell *terrible* and will ruin your crop.

POTATOES

Varieties: 'Adirondack blue' is a dependable, high-yielding blue-fleshed potato. 'Red Pontiac' potatoes are a popular gourmet potato variety with sweet white flesh and thin red skin. 'Yukon gold' are golden-fleshed with excellent flavor and dry texture, great for roasting.

Planting: Cut potatoes so that each piece is about 2-3 inches big and contains at least 1 or 2 eye buds. If a potato is smaller than a golf ball, leave it whole. Dig a trench 6-8 inches deep, and place potato inside with cut side facing down and eye buds facing up. Cover with 4 inches of soil. As the plant grows, mound more soil around the base, eventually going above the ground level. You do not need to harden off this plant. 12 inches between plants.

Growing tips: 'Adirondack blue' 80 days to harvest; 'Red Pontiac' 80-100 days to harvest; 'Yukon gold' 70-85 days to harvest. Potatoes do not compete well against weeds. Plant in a well-weeded spot with full sun and keep clean of weeds throughout the season. Keep potatoes well watered through the summer, especially when they are flowering. Stop watering when leaves turn yellow and plants appear to be dying back. This is a signal that the plant is putting its energy into the tubers (potatoes) that you will later harvest! Fresh "new" potatoes (not for storage) can be dug as soon as the potatoes have reached about golf ball sized. These potatoes will need to be refrigerated. Potatoes for storage should be ready to dig 2-3 weeks after the leaves dry up. When storing, choose potatoes with no blemishes or cuts in the skin. Also, watch out for rotten potatoes - they can encourage more to rot if stored next to each other and they smell *awful*. Store unwashed potatoes in a paper bag in a cool, dry, dark place where they are protected from rodents. Do not wash until you are ready to use.



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