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Lower Columbia School Gardens
Introduction to Monthly Planting Guide

This guide was created for use by Volunteers in School Gardens in the Pacific NW, specifically (but not solely) in Cowlitz County and surrounding areas. We hope it will make things simpler and provide much of the planting information that is needed - all in one place. We've borrowed and/or narrowed down ideas and info from multiple sources - thank you, sources! Those sources include **SchoolGardenProject.org** in Eugene, **Territorial Seed Co.** and **Seattle Tilth's Maritime NW Garden Guide**, tailoring it to our own experience of what has worked well.
Comments, questions or suggestions can be sent to info@lcschoolgardens.org. *Happy Growing!*

CROP	The type of plant you will be growing. Specific varieties of each type of plant vary greatly and different varieties may be better-suited for certain seasons or locations. Locally-produced seed varieties generally yield better results in the garden as the seeds will have a predisposition to that climate. Within this document you will find a list of our preferred varieties, based on our experience growing for School Gardens in Cowlitz County and surrounding areas.
SOIL TEMP.	Measure temperature about 3" beneath the soil's surface. Proper temps are essential for germination and healthy plants, whether starting seeds indoors or putting them directly in the ground. Planting within the correct range will produce better germination and help with crop yields.
PLANTING DATE	An estimate of when one can generally plant a certain crop in the Maritime NW, based on the date of the "last frost" for this area (USDA Hardiness Zone 8b). *(For best results plant seeds based on soil temperatures).*
SPACING	Proper spacing is very important to plant health. Certain plants grow just fine when planted very tightly together (i.e. onions) while others do not. Adequate spacing can also help provide proper air circulation and help avoid pressure on the soil to provide nutrients for too many plants.
DEPTH	How far beneath the soil a seed should be placed for proper germination. *The rule of thumb is to plant a seed about twice as deep as its longest side.*
METHOD	**Seed:** Directly plant the seeds *outdoors* in the garden. **Indoors:** Start the seeds indoors in a bright window, with UV grow lights, or in a greenhouse, in trays or pots. When seeds are started indoors they will need to be **transplanted** into the garden by a certain date. Some will be "potted up" before being transplanted to the garden (tomatoes, peppers, etc.), giving them more room to grow in a bigger pot before being set outside. See notes for more information on when to pot up and/or transplant. **Transplant:** take a plant that has been grown in a pot or container (inside a greenhouse, etc.) and plant it in the garden - don't forget to harden off before transplanting.
FROM SEED TO HARVEST	The general amount of time (in weeks) it will take a crop to fully mature from seed. This info can aid greatly in School Garden planning. Check seed catalogs (like Territorial Seed Co.) or seed packets for maturation dates, as that can vary greatly between varieties.
ADDITIONAL INFO	At the bottom of each month's page you will find additional information, including crops that can be continually planted that month, crops that have been previously started indoors and need to be transplanted to the garden that month, and other general garden information.
Harvest Time	The harvest list is not exhaustive but intended as a guideline for what a "typical" season might look like. Some fruits and vegetables may be ready sooner or later depending on varieties and factors like weather. Refer to seed packets or "from seed to harvest" for a better idea of when varieties will be ready for harvest.

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