

Growing Learning Communities

Annual School Garden Management Calendar

UC Botanical Garden Education Department

This calendar offers a simplified month-by-month timing guideline for planting and maintenance of school gardens in the East Bay.

September

Plant

Direct sow seed:

- spinach - 2 handspans apart
- lettuce - 2 handspans apart
- radish - 1" apart
- carrots - 1" apart

Direct sow means to seed directly into the garden. Follow the instructions on the back of the seed packet as to how deep and how far apart to place the seeds.

Harvest

- potatoes (planted in may)
- corn (planted in may)
- amaranth (planted in may)
- sunflowers (planted in march)
- broccoli (planted in april)

Other tasks

Collect dried scarlet runner beans (planted in march) for next year and store in a cool, dry place.

October

Plant

Direct sow seed:

- garlic sets - 2 handspans apart
- cilantro - 1 handspan apart
- red clover - scatter seed, rake over, and cover with a thin layer of straw

Harvest

- pumpkin (planted in february)
- radish (planted in september)

Other Tasks

Pull out dried, old vegetables and plants for compost.

Turn compost.

Thin carrot seedlings (planted in September).

November

Plant

Direct sow seed:

- peas - 1 handspan apart
- fava beans - 1 handspan apart

Harvest

- carrots (planted in september)
- winter squash (planted in may)
- spinach (planted in september)

Other tasks

Turn compost.

Provide a trellis structure for climbing peas.

December

Plant

Direct sow seed:

- radish - 1" apart

Harvest

- lettuce (planted in september)

Other Tasks

Mulch with straw to suppress weeds.

January

Plant

Direct sow seed:

- onion sets - 2 handspans apart
- spinach - 2 handspans apart

Seed in flats, 2" pots or origami cups:

- broccoli
- kale

When seeding into flats, fill plastic or wooden flats (approx. 12" x 30") with high quality soil. Seed (sow) the flats, following seed packet instructions. When the seedlings have at least one or two sets of true leaves, cut the plants apart with a butter knife or a hand trowel and transplant them into the ground or into larger pots.

Other tasks

Weed!

Turn compost.

Plan garden for spring.

Order seeds.

February

Plant

Direct sow seed:

- carrots - 1" apart
- collard greens - 3 handspans apart
- swiss chard - 2 handspans apart
- lettuce - 2 handspans apart
- beets - 3" apart

Seed in flats, 2" pots or origami cups:

- peppers/chilis
- cherry tomatoes
- pumpkins
- cucumbers

Harvest

- cilantro (planted in october)

Other tasks

Weed!

Turn under one half of the fava bean crop (planted in november) for

How do fava beans improve the soil?

Fava beans are legumes. The beneficial bacteria that live on the roots of legumes fix nitrogen in the soil and provide nutrients to growing plants. By turning under cover crops, you are also incorporating organic material that adds structure to the soil and provides material for microbes to break down into nutrients.

March

Plant

Direct sow seed:

- radish-1" apart

Seed in flats, 2" pots or origami cups:

- scarlet runner beans
- sunflowers
- marigolds

Transplant into ground

- broccoli (jan.) - 2 handspans apart
- kale (jan.) - 2 handspans apart

Harvest

- fava beans (planted in november)
- spinach (planted in january)

Other tasks

Weed!

Turn compost.

April

Plant

Direct sow seed:

- nasturtium - 1 handspan apart
- peas - 1 handspan apart

Seed in flats, 2" pots or origami cups:

- broccoli

Transplant into ground

- sunflowers (mar.) - 3 handspans apart

Harvest

- peas (planted in november)
- collard greens (planted in february)

Other tasks

Thin carrot seedlings (planted in february).

Weed.

Turn under red clover (planted in october).

Look for beneficial and pest insects.

May

Plant

Direct sow seed:

- potatoes - 3 handspans apart
- lettuce - 2 handspans apart
- amaranth - 1 handspan apart
- "three sisters" garden:
 - corn - 2 handspans apart
 - winter squash - one plant per 10 corn plants
 - pole beans - one plant per each corn plant, planted 2 weeks after the corn

The "three sisters" garden is a great example of companion planting. Corn is seeded first and acts as a structure for the climbing pole beans, which are planted two weeks later to give the corn a chance to grow. Beans fix nitrogen in the soil to provide nutrients for the corn and squash. Squash plants grow along the ground in long vines, acting as mulch to prevent weeds from growing and hold moisture in the soil.

Transplant into ground

- pumpkins (feb.) - 4 handspans apart
- peppers (feb.) - 2 handspans apart
- cherry tomatoes (feb.) - 3 handspans apart
- marigolds (mar.) - 2 handspans apart
- scarlet runner beans (mar.) for the teepee
- cucumber (feb.) - 4 handspans apart

May, Cont.

Harvest

- kale (planted in january)
- broccoli (planted in january)
- lettuce (planted in february)
- carrots (planted in february)
- beets (planted in february)

Other tasks

Turn compost.

Fertilize the garden with compost.

June

Harvest

- onion (planted in january)
- nasturtium (planted in april)
- garlic (planted in october)

Transplant into ground

- broccoli (apr.) - 2 handspans apart

Other tasks

Weed.

Mulch the garden with straw.

Build the teepee for scarlet runner beans.

How to build a teepee for scarlet runner beans:

- 1) Lay five or six 6-foot or taller poles on the ground. Bamboo is lightweight, sturdy and easy to work with, but any poles will do.
- 2) Tie off one end of the bunch of poles with twine (this is the top of the teepee). Wind the twine tightly around the bunch about 1 foot from the top.
- 3) To make sure the teepee is level, all ends at the base of the teepee should be even.
- 4) Stand the teepee up and spread the poles out at the base. You may want to dig them in to add more stability. Scarlet runner beans will wrap themselves around the poles as they grow.

July & August

Harvest

Some of these plants can be early-harvested in June or harvested in September.

- peas (planted in april)
- swiss chard (planted in february)
- lettuce (planted in may)
- peppers (planted in february)
- cherry tomatoes (planted in february)
- cucumbers (planted in february)
- pole beans (planted in may)

Other tasks

Turn compost.

Fertilize the garden with compost.

Summer care for the garden:

- Have a sign-up list and rotate the summer care among the existing "garden club" members.
- Get a summer school teacher, a parent, or a neighbor involved in care of the garden.
- Call the Master Gardeners association and ask if there is someone local who is interested in helping with the garden over the summer.

If the garden cannot be cared for over the summer, mulch it with straw to prevent weeds from growing.