

Is Now the Time to Start My Summer Garden?
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It's time to start asking the question, is now the time to start my summer garden? There are things to consider before you plant. Is the soil too wet to work outside? What are the nighttime temperatures? What are the soil temperatures?

If the soil is not too wet to work outside, then there are things to be done to prepare your soil for planting. First, remove all dead debris that may have accumulated over the winter. Remove all the old leaves and dead material off the soil.

Remove mulch, if you have used it in your garden. The mulch can remain out of the garden until the plants are established. Mulch will help the soil to warm up, it'll help conserve water and in the hot summer it will keep the plant's roots cool. Weed-free straw is a good, affordable garden mulch.

Are you planting in the ground? Do you have raised bed? Both will need some amendments. The best amendment would be compost. Compost is like a time-released fertilizer and can be added to the soil as a topdressing. You don't want to till too deep. That would disturb all the lovely microorganisms living in the soil. Those microorganisms work in the soil to break down nutrients that the plant needs to survive.

Now you are ready to plant! Seeds or seedlings? If it's seeds that you're planting then smooth out the soil, make a hole or a trench for the seeds. Carefully read your seed pack to ensure proper planting, care and harvest information. Check the seed packet for the depth, usually no more than 2-3 times the seed in depth.

If you're planting seedlings or transplants be aware each plant has a certain soil temperature requirement. If you're planting for summer vegetable harvest then probably a soil temperature of about 50 degrees would be ideal. If you're planting flowers, they're not so fussy. But vegetables don't like to get their feet cold. They will survive but will get off to a slow start.

You may have started seeds in the winter indoors and now is the time to start introducing them to the outdoors. Start bringing them outdoors for short periods of time, slowly increasing the time each day. Don't give them direct sun right away. You could sunburn them. Start with dappled shade and slowly move them to the full sun.

If you're looking to buy vegetable starts for your summer garden, UCCE Master Gardeners of Amador County are hosting our annual plant sale on **Saturday, April 27, 2019**, from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the American Legion Hall located at 12134 Airport Rd in Martell. Start your spring gardening off right by picking up your favorite tomato or other vegetable varieties which have been propagated and cared for by Master Gardeners. Not sure what to plant? Master Gardeners can make suggestions and recommendations based on what has grown well for them in the area. But it is not just vegetables that you will find at the plant sale. We will have pollinators, herbs and flowering plants, both annual and perennial plants.

We accept only cash or check, please. Parking is free and plentiful. Come early for the best selection. All sale proceeds support free classes, programs and activities provided to the community by UCCE Master Gardeners of Amador County. We plan to have experts on hand to answer your irrigation questions as well as home landscape and garden questions. The UCCE Master Food Preservers will be on hand too, passing out samples and recipes. If you have any questions about the plant sale or other gardening issues, call the Master Gardeners at the UC Cooperative Extension office from 10am to noon, Tuesday through

Thursday, 209-223-6838 or e-mail, mgamador@ucanr.edu. Web site: <http://ucanr.edu/mgamador>. Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 12200-B Airport Rd. in Jackson. You can also find us on Facebook.

So get out there and get your garden ready!