



## Bronx Green-Up • THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

Bronx Green-Up, the community gardening outreach program of The New York Botanical Garden, provides horticultural advice, technical assistance, and training to local gardeners, urban farmers, school groups, and other organizations interested in improving neighborhoods through greening projects. At the heart of Bronx Green-Up are the community gardens, school gardens, and urban farms of the Bronx. For additional information, contact Bronx Green-Up at 718.817.8026 or [bronxgreenup@nybg.org](mailto:bronxgreenup@nybg.org), or visit [www.nybg.org/green\\_up](http://www.nybg.org/green_up)

### Planting Vegetable Seeds Outdoors

Some plants benefit from being grown in shallow trays and then transplanted into the garden. Other plants prefer to be seeded directly into the ground.

The plants listed here prefer not to be transplanted.<sup>1</sup> Seed them directly into the garden.

#### Vegetables

beans	root crops (like carrots,
Chinese cabbage	radishes, and
corn	parsnips; however,
cucumbers	beets, turnips,
melons	and celeriac may be
pumpkins	grown as transplants
squash	or directly seeded)

#### Herbs

borage  
burnet (transplant only when very young)  
caraway (transplant only when very young)  
chervil  
coriander (cilantro)  
dill (transplant only when very young)

### When Should I Plant?

#### Early spring

- You may plant the seeds of peas, spinach, leaf lettuce, collards, kale, turnip, and radish as early as April 1.
- You may plant the seeds of kohlrabi, mustard greens, chard, chives, cilantro, parsley, beet, carrot, parsnip, and turnip as early as April 15.

#### May and beyond

In May, after the last frost, you may plant warm-season vegetables. Refer to the *Planting Guide for the New York City Area*<sup>2</sup> for a list of plants and planting times.

<sup>1</sup> Bubel, N. (1988). *The New Seed-Starters Handbook*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press, p.45.

<sup>2</sup> Ameroso, J. (2003). *Planting Guide for the New York City Area*. Cornell University Cooperative Extension.

## Tips for Sowing Seeds Outdoors

### Preparation

- Prepare the soil ahead of time. In the fall or spring, amend the soil with compost (generally a 2-inch layer) and dig it in. The soil should be worked 6–8 inches deep.
- If you are starting a new vegetable patch, wait a week after you have turned the soil before planting. This will allow weed seeds to germinate, which can be picked out of the bed before you plant.
- Check the soil moisture of your planting bed before sowing seeds; you want it to be moist, not too wet or dry.
- Rake the soil to smooth it out for planting. You don't want chunks of soil or plant debris in your seedbed, as this will allow water to collect unevenly in places.

### Sowing Techniques

- If planting in vegetable rows, they should run north to south to give the plants equal exposure to sunlight. The rows should be spaced far enough apart to allow for full-grown plants: The leaves of mature plants should barely touch. If you plan to walk between rows, leave an additional 12 inches for a path.
- Sow seeds according to the recommendations on your seed packet. (You may be directed to sow 2–3 times more densely than the space will allow for full-grown plants. This means you will need to thin the plants when young so that they don't become overcrowded.)
- Cover seeds at the depth recommended on your seed packet. Lightly tap down the soil to ensure good seed-to-soil contact; gently water them in.
- For pumpkins, squash, and cucumbers, build a small mound of soil and plant 3–5 seeds per mound.

### Post-Planting Care

- If there is no rainfall, water the seeds daily until they germinate to keep the soil surface from drying out. Use a watering can or hose with a fine sprinkler head to ensure even watering and that the seedbed will not be disturbed by too harsh a spray.
- Thin seedlings to desired spacing, if necessary, once the first set of true leaves has developed.