



# PHS Green City Teachers



## Planting Timeline

In Philadelphia, the last frost date is around May 1, and the first frost can be as early as October 31. With the school year starting in early September and ending by mid-June, the window for growing warm-season crops is very limited. There are, however, plenty of cool-season crops that we can get in between all those deadlines, since they are cold-tolerant (see below). Some of these plants can also be started indoors to give them a head-start before planting them outdoors in the ground or in containers.

## Advantages of raised beds

Beds raised 10 to 12 inches above the normal soil level have many advantages in short season areas. Soil in raised beds dries out and warms faster in the spring, and drainage is better throughout the season, allowing for earlier planting and better plant growth.

Seasons can also be extended earlier and later by using row covers or building cold frames and mini greenhouses.

*Tips for growing short-season vegetables can be found in this handout from the folks in Idaho, who know all about growing vegetables during a very short season:*

<http://info.ag.uidaho.edu/resources/PDFs/PNW0497.pdf>

## Examples of how long it takes to get a pickable crop from seed

|                             |                        |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Leaf lettuce                | 28 days to maturity    |
| Claytonia (Winter purslane) | 40 days to maturity    |
| 'French Breakfast' radish   | 23-28 days to maturity |
| 'Cherriette' radish         | 20-26 days to maturity |
| 'White Icicle' radish       | 27-35 days to maturity |
| 'Melody' spinach            | 42-50 days to maturity |
| 'Tyee' spinach              | 39-45 days to maturity |
| 'Winter Bloomsdale' spinach | 45 days to maturity    |
| 'Roquette' arugula          | 40-45 days to maturity |
| 'Runway' arugula            | 21-40 days to maturity |
| 'Red Giant' mustard         | 30-35 days to maturity |
| 'Osaka Purple' mustard      | 21 days to maturity    |
| Bright Lights' Swiss chard  | 28 days to maturity    |





## Timeline

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>February - March</b> | start seeds indoors for cool & warm season crops                                  |
| <b>April</b>            | start cool-season crops outdoors  |
| <b>Late April</b>       | move cool-season seedlings outdoors   |
| <b>May</b>              | move warm-season seedlings outdoors, start warm-season crops outdoors from seed   |
| <b>June</b>             | harvest whatever is ready, implement summer maintenance schedule                  |
| <b>September</b>        | harvest whatever survived the summer (except root crops); start cool-season crops |

## What to plant

*Here are some suggestions for food crops to plant in a school garden, broken into the four seasons: spring, spring-fall, fall, and fall-spring.*

**Plant in spring, harvest in spring:** short-season crops to plant at the beginning of the school year, and harvest before snow (can stand frost):

|                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Herbs                | Turnips        |
| Radishes             | Chinese Greens |
| Lettuce, Salad mixes | Onions         |
| Spinach              |                |

**Plant in spring, harvest in fall:** long-season vegetables that stand a chance of surviving the summer with minimal care (occasional maintenance visits plus lots of rain during the summer):

|                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Sweet potatoes  | Grapes              |
| White potatoes  | Cucumbers           |
| Cherry tomatoes | Sunflowers          |
| Gourds          | Greens: Okra, Beets |
| Herbs           |                     |

**Plant in fall, harvest in fall:** short-season crops to plant out as soon as school starts, and harvest before Thanksgiving (can stand frost):

|          |                |
|----------|----------------|
| Herbs    | Turnips        |
| Radishes | Chinese Greens |
| Lettuce  | Onions         |
| Spinach  | Salad mixes    |

**Plant in fall, harvest in spring:**

|                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Bulbs                | Onions       |
| Garlic               | Strawberries |
| Spinach, greens, etc |              |

