

Pennsylvania Planting Calendar

Zone 7a — Eastern PA

Philadelphia · Lehigh Valley · Chester County · Lower Bucks County

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2026

CROP	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
VEGETABLES												
Tomatoes		Start Indoors			Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window					
Peppers	Start Indoors				Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window					
Cucumbers				Start Indoors	Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window					
Zucchini / Summer Squash				Start Indoors	Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window					
Winter Squash & Pumpkins				Start Indoors	Direct Sow / Transplant Out			Harvest Window				
Green Beans					Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window					
Sweet Corn					Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window					
Broccoli & Cabbage		Start Indoors		Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window						
Kale & Swiss Chard			Start Indoors			Harvest Window						
Lettuce & Salad Greens		Start Indoors		Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window		Direct Sow / Transplant Out	Harvest Window			
Spinach			Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window			Direct Sow / Transplant Out	Harvest Window			
Peas			Direct Sow / Transplant Out			Harvest Window						
Carrots & Beets				Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window						
Onions	Start Indoors			Direct Sow / Transplant Out			Harvest Window					
Potatoes				Direct Sow / Transplant Out			Harvest Window					
Sweet Potatoes			Start Indoors		Direct Sow / Transplant Out				Harvest Window			
Radishes				Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window		Direct Sow / Transplant Out	Harvest Window			
HERBS												
Basil				Start Indoors		Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window				
Parsley		Start Indoors		Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window						
Cilantro				Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window		Direct Sow / Transplant Out	Harvest Window			
Dill				Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window						
FRUITS & GARLIC												
Strawberries				Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window						
Blueberries				Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window						
Blackberries & Raspberries				Direct Sow / Transplant Out		Harvest Window						
Garlic (fall-planted)							Harvest Window			Direct Sow / Transplant Out		

LEGEND: Start Indoors (orange bar), Direct Sow / Transplant Out (green bar), Harvest Window (orange bar)

Timing calibrated for Eastern PA. Garlic: plant Oct–Nov based on your county's first hard freeze. Succession crops (lettuce, spinach, radishes, cilantro) shown with spring + fall windows. gethandyoutdoors.com/pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Planting Calendar

Page 2: Indoor Seed Start Calculator | Zone 7a — Eastern PA

YOUR LAST FROST DATE (avg)

April 15

Count back from your last frost date to find your ideal indoor start week.
 Dates below are target sowing dates for starting seeds indoors under lights.
 Adjust 1-2 weeks earlier if your space is cool; later if your space is very warm.

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CROP / PLANT	WEEKS before LFD	START DATE LFD = April 15	TIPS & NOTES
— VEGETABLES —			
Onions & Leeks	12 wks	Jan 21	Very slow grower — the earlier the better; thin to strongest seedling
Celery & Celeriac	10 wks	Feb 4	Soak seeds 24 hrs before sowing; needs steady warmth & moisture
Peppers	9 wks	Feb 11	Bottom heat (75-85 F) strongly recommended; slow to sprout
Eggplant	9 wks	Feb 11	Same timing as peppers; keep soil warm until germination
Tomatoes	7 wks	Feb 25	Harden off 7-10 days before transplanting outdoors
Broccoli & Cauliflower	6 wks	Mar 4	Cold-hardy — can transplant 3-4 weeks BEFORE last frost
Cabbage	6 wks	Mar 4	Cold-tolerant; transplant 2-3 weeks before last frost is fine
Sweet Potato Slips	6 wks	Mar 4	Root sweet potatoes in water to produce slips; needs warm spot
Kale & Chard	5 wks	Mar 11	Hardy; can transplant 2-3 weeks before last frost
Lettuce & Salad Mix	5 wks	Mar 11	Also direct-sow under row cover 4 weeks before last frost
Cucumbers	3 wks	Mar 25	Dislikes transplant shock — use biodegradable pots
Zucchini & Summer Squash	3 wks	Mar 25	Fast grower; direct-sow is equally effective
Winter Squash & Pumpkins	3 wks	Mar 25	Direct-sow is fine; only start inside if you have a short season
— HERBS —			
Parsley	8 wks	Feb 18	Slow germinator (2-4 wks); soak seeds overnight first
Basil	5 wks	Mar 11	Cold-sensitive — wait until after last frost to transplant outside
Cilantro	4 wks	Mar 18	Bolts quickly in heat; fall growing often more productive
Dill	4 wks	Mar 18	Transplant carefully — tap root is delicate; direct sow is easier

GERMINATION TIPS:

* Soil temp 65-85 F is ideal for most crops — a seedling heat mat makes a big difference.

* Keep seed-starting mix moist but not soggy. Cover trays with a clear dome until sprouts emerge.

* Once sprouted, provide 14-16 hrs of bright light per day. Grow lights 2-3" above seedlings prevent legginess.

* Harden off all transplants: set outside in a sheltered spot 7-10 days before planting in the garden.

Pennsylvania Planting Calendar

Page 3: Frost Date Reference | Average Last & First Frost by City

HOW TO USE THIS REFERENCE:

* "Last Frost" = avg final 32 F freeze in spring
(50% probability, NOAA 30-yr climate normals)

* "First Frost" = avg first 32 F freeze in fall.

* Season bar = frost-free growing window.
Microclimates vary — low areas freeze earlier.

CITY	COUNTY	LAST SPRING FROST (avg)	FIRST FALL FROST (avg)	DAYS	FROST-FREE GROWING SEASON																	
					J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D						
Zone 7a — Southeast PA					USDA Zone 7a																	
Philadelphia	Philadelphia Co.	Mar 26	Nov 19	238																		
West Chester	Chester Co.	Apr 8	Oct 30	205																		
Doylestown	Bucks Co.	Apr 13	Oct 25	195																		
Pottstown	Montgomery Co.	Apr 12	Oct 25	196																		
Allentown	Lehigh Co.	Apr 20	Oct 20	183																		
Bethlehem	Northampton Co.	Apr 20	Oct 22	185																		
Zone 6a — Central & Western PA					USDA Zone 6a																	
Lancaster	Lancaster Co.	Apr 22	Oct 18	179																		
York	York Co.	Apr 25	Oct 15	173																		
Reading	Berks Co.	Apr 18	Oct 22	187																		
Harrisburg	Dauphin Co.	Apr 25	Oct 12	170																		
State College	Centre Co.	May 3	Oct 5	155																		
Pittsburgh	Allegheny Co.	Apr 29	Oct 12	166																		
Zone 5a — Northern PA					USDA Zone 5a																	
Erie	Erie Co.	May 8	Oct 22	167																		
Williamsport	Lycoming Co.	May 5	Oct 10	158																		
Wilkes-Barre	Luzerne Co.	May 8	Oct 7	152																		
Scranton	Lackawanna Co.	May 10	Oct 5	148																		
Stroudsburg	Monroe Co.	May 15	Oct 1	139																		
Towanda	Bradford Co.	May 18	Sep 28	133																		
DuBois	Clearfield Co.	May 18	Oct 2	137																		

NOTES ON FROST DATES:

* Dates = 50% probability from NOAA 30-yr normals — actual dates vary year to year.
* Row covers & cold frames extend your season 2-4 weeks in both spring and fall.

* Low areas, valleys & frost pockets can freeze 2-3 weeks before nearby higher ground.
* Urban heat effect: city centers like Philadelphia are often 1-3 F warmer than suburbs.

Pennsylvania Planting Calendar

Page 4: Soil Temperature Cheat Sheet + Succession Planting Guide

SOIL TEMPERATURE GERMINATION GUIDE

CROP	MIN SOIL F	OPTIMAL RANGE F	GERMINATION TEMP RANGE (32-100 F)						
			32	50	60	70	80	90	100
— COLD-TOLERANT (sow when soil is still cool) —									
Peas	35	45–65							
Spinach	35	45–65							
Kale & Chard	40	50–85							
Lettuce & Salad Mix	40	60–65							
Radishes	40	65–85							
Carrots	45	60–70							
Beets	45	60–85							
Broccoli & Cabbage	45	65–75							
Onions	50	60–75							
— WARM-SEASON (wait until soil has warmed) —									
Green Beans	50	60–85							
Sweet Corn	55	60–95							
Cucumbers	60	70–90							
Zucchini & Squash	60	70–95							
Tomatoes	60	65–85							
Peppers	65	75–85							
Basil	60	70–85							
Sweet Potatoes	65	75–85							
Winter Squash	60	70–90							

Bar key: light shading = suboptimal (germinates slowly) | solid colour = optimal range

SUCCESSION PLANTING GUIDE

Stagger plantings to avoid all-at-once harvests and extend your season for weeks instead of days. Intervals shown are minimum spacing for continuous yield.

CROP	INTERVAL between sowings	TIPS & PA TIMING NOTES
Lettuce & Salad Mix	2–3 wks	Spring & fall only; skip summer heat <i>Pause Jun 1; restart mid-Aug</i>
Radishes	2 wks	25-30 days — fastest crop in the garden <i>Spring & fall only</i>
Spinach	2–3 wks	Sow until 4 wks before last frost date <i>Spring & fall rotations</i>
Green Beans	3 wks	3 sowings = continuous Jul-Sep harvest <i>Last sow: 8 wks before frost</i>
Beets	3 wks	Spring & fall; frost sweetens fall beets <i>Last sow: 8 wks before frost</i>
Carrots	3–4 wks	Spring + late-summer sow for fall storage <i>Fall sow = Aug for PA</i>
Cilantro	2–3 wks	Bolts fast in heat — keep re-seeding <i>Spring & fall only</i>
Peas	Once	One spring sowing, one fall sowing <i>Plant Mar-Apr & Jul-Aug</i>
Sweet Corn	2 wks	2-3 sowings prevents feast-or-famine <i>Sow May-Jun for PA</i>
Cucumbers	4 wks	2nd planting extends harvest season <i>2 successions for PA</i>

PRO TIPS FOR PENNSYLVANIA GARDENERS:

- * A \$10 soil thermometer is worth every penny — soil temp beats calendar dates every time.
- * Black plastic mulch raises soil 5-10 F — ideal for peppers, eggplant & sweet potatoes.

- * Row cover protects to 24 F and extends both ends of the season by 3-4 weeks.
- * Zone 5a/6a tip: plant beans, squash & cucumbers LATER — warm soil always beats a cold sow.

MY GARDEN NOTES
