



The calendar was produced using several years of data from vegetable gardens in west Pasco County Florida (Zone 9a). Additional information was obtained from other local growers and numerous horticultural sources. It should be noted that even in one county the growing conditions can vary considerably. The frost free dates are critical for many vegetables and the biggest variable in zone 9. The southwest corner of Pasco county is frost free most years. Many other spots, especially inland from the Gulf, experience some frost days most years and severe freezes in many. The ranges for the different vegetables are averages. Individuals are encouraged to adjust the bars according to their specific locale.

**Seed starting dates:** All planting dates are optimal. Seeds started in winter indoors using grow lights or a greenhouse may be started earlier than indicated. Cool weather vegetable seeds started indoors during the summer need lower soil temperatures to germinate than available outdoors. Most vegetables in this category will germinate in an air conditioned room with temperatures under 80°. The date seeds can be sown directly into the ground will vary year to year. Most plant seedling are frost sensitive even if the more mature plant is cold tolerant.

**Succession planting:** Plant small amounts of a particular vegetable every 3 to 4 weeks throughout its planting phase. The availability of rapidly maturing vegetables like lettuce and salad greens, carrots, radishes, summer squash, peas and beans will be increased if this practice is followed.

**Experiment with different types and varieties of vegetable to find out what grows best in your garden.** Talk with other local vegetable growers to see what works in your neighborhood.

**Keep records:** Recording planting and harvesting dates will assist in making the right decisions in future years. Field tag each planting with type and date to remember what was planted.

**Growing organically is friendly to the environment.** Vegetables grown naturally with minimal or no use of chemicals taste better. The absence of pesticides will encourage natural predators such as birds, wasps and lizards to frequent your garden. The use of compost and mulch will increase soil moisture retention and reduce the frequency of watering.

Excellent Book: *Vegetable Gardening in Florida* by James M. Stephens

The following chart lists varieties and notes for some vegetables

	COOL WEATHER	WARM WEATHER	VARIETIES/NOTES
Bean	X	X	Asian long beans will produce longer during hot weather
Beet	X		
Broccoli	X		Side sprouting varieties will extend productivity. Calabrese and Arcadia are excellent choices.
Brussels Sprouts	X		
Cabbage	X		Small head varieties will mature faster and are better suited for family use.
Cantaloupe		X	
Carrot	X		Early maturing varieties will extend the planting date in the spring.
Cauliflower	X		Very cool weather vegetable
Celery	X		14-21 seed germination time takes patience.
Corn		X	Takes a lot of garden space.
Cucumber		X	Trellised vining types produce more in less space
Eggplant		X	Thrives in hot weather
Fennel Bulb	X	X	Grows year round but produces best in cooler weather
Garlic	X		Difficult to get good bulbs. Soft neck varieties for best results.
Greens, Salad	X		
Greens, Summer		X	Callaloo, Kang Kong, Salad Mallow are some unusual greens that thrive in hot weather
Greens, Cooking	X		Varies with type. Kale and collards hold up well in moderately warm weather.
Melons, Water		X	Tolerates warm weather. Vines require room to spread. Sugar Baby excellent small melon.
Okra		X	Does best in hot weather
Onion	X	X	Many types grow year round but produce best in cool weather. Short day bulb types started in fall. Bunching onions will survive year round.
Peas	X		Plant small amounts every three weeks starting in mid/late September for harvest throughout the winter. Very cool weather vegetable
Peanut		X	Best planted early to mid May for autumn harvest and storage
Peppers		X	Container plants will produce fruit for several years if frost protected
Potato	X		Grows best in cooler weather. Plants are very frost sensitive. Plants will grow during warmer weather but may not produce potatoes.
Pumpkin	X	X	
Radish	X		French Breakfast are an excellent variety. Diakon will grow in warmer weather than regular radishes
Southern Peas		X	Plant in early June for summer cover crop and autumn harvest and storage
Squash, Summer	X		Very susceptible to mildew. Start plants often and remove older plants when mildew becomes excessive. Very prolific.
Squash, Winter	X	X	Can be successfully grown following the planting schedule
Sweet Potato		X	Plant in May/June for late autumn harvest and winter storage
Tomato		X	Most varieties will not pollinate during hot weather. Hybrid "solar" types and cherry tomatoes will pollinate at higher temperatures. Heirloom Brandywine and Peron produce excellent tomatoes
Turnip	X		

