

Growing Vegetables from Seed Workshop

Follow Up Care

General instructions for seedling care:

- Place covered under lights until seeds germinate.
- Take out of plastic bag as soon as seeds begin to germinate.
- Do not allow potting mix to dry out! Check about every other day to see if watering is needed. Water gently with a watering can – allow excess water to drain away
- Seedlings will be ready to transplant into cell packs or small pots 7-10 days after germination, or as soon as true leaves appear.
- After transplanting, start applying a weak solution of liquid fertilizer (e.g. MiracleGro, fish emulsion or compost tea) every other time you water.
- Young plants will be ready to plant in the garden or into larger containers when roots start to grow out of the bottom of the cells and plants are 4-6” tall, approximately 4 weeks after transplanting.

Seeds sown:

Swiss Chard – *Beta vulgaris* var. *cicla* ‘Bright Lights’ or ‘Rainbow’. A type of beet bred for leaf quality rather than large storage roots. Leaf blade and mid-rib edible and flavorful.

- Seeds germinate in 5-10 days
- Transplant (or direct seed) into garden March-April (or Aug.-Sept), spaced 8-10 inches apart.
- Thrive in well-drained soil and full sun (8-10 hours).
- Cut outer leaves when they are young and tender, 8-12 in. long, but can be picked at any time before then. Inner leaves will grow for a subsequent harvest.

Kale – *Brassica napus* ‘Red Russian’ A nutritious and tasty brassica species, kale is tolerant of frosts and colder temperatures can even sweeten the taste of leaves. Kale leaves can be harvested immature, about 30 days after sowing, or at maturity (50-70 days), when they are better cooked.

- Seeds germinate in 4-10 days/
- Transplant or direct seed from mid. February to June, and again in August through September.
- Harvest as baby greens, older leaves first, or the entire plant.

Master Gardener | Chatham County

Lettuce Blends – *Lactuca sativa*. A blend of several lettuce varieties best harvested by cutting. Performs well in containers

- Seeds germinate in 3-5 days. Seeds will not germinate above 80° F Plant seeds or transplants Feb-Apr, Aug-Sep.
- Transplant when plants have 4-6 true leaves and a well-developed root system. Space 2-3 in. apart for harvesting by clipping, or 8 in. apart to harvest loose heads.
- Leaves can be harvested at any time. Picking outer leaves encourages inner leaves' growth. As temperatures warm, lettuce may bolt (produce flowers), causing leaves to taste bitter.

General instructions for care of transplants:

- Water when you cannot squeeze water out of the top ½ in. of media
- Fertilize with a weak solution (1/2 recommended rate) of liquid fertilizer every other time you water.
- Transplants are ready to transplant into the garden or large containers when roots start growing out of the bottom of the pots and plants are 4"-5" tall (in approximately 4 weeks).

Seedlings Transplanted

Collards – *Brassica oleracea* var. *acephala* 'Georgia Southern' A traditional southern crop related to cabbage and other cole crops that performs well in warm and cold weather and other fickle conditions in the southeast.

Transplant into garden mid. Feb.- June, seeds and transplants Aug.-Sep. Space 12-18 inches apart for harvesting larger outer leaves when 10-12 in long. Space at 6-8 inches for harvesting at 6-8 in. height

Cabbage – *Brassica oleracea* var. *capitata* 'Early Jersey Wakefield' or 'Premium Dutch Flat Late'. An ancient crop in the mustard family (Brassicaceae a.k.a Cruciferae) that has been cultivated for at least 3,000 years. Thrive in cooler temperatures, best at 60-65°F, and tolerating as low as 20°F

Transplant into garden mid. Feb.- June, seeds and transplants Aug.-Sep. Space 12-18 inches apart for harvesting larger outer leaves when 10-12 in long. Space at 6-8 inches for harvesting at 6-8 in. height. Space to 12-18 in. apart in rows. Should reach mature head size in about two months.

Review slides and additional Extension resources:

go.ncsu.edu/veggieseedresources

Gardening questions? Contact your local N.C. Cooperative Extension center to speak to an Extension Master Gardener VolunteerSM In Chatham County, EMG Volunteers are available to answer your questions Monday & Wednesday 1:00 – 4:00 pm, Friday 9:00am-12:00pm. Call 919-545-2715 or email

