



# Homegrown Horticulture

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

## Growing vegetables from seeds or transplants

Almost all vegetables are started from seed, whether indoors or outdoors, with exception of a few (like potatoes). As a gardener, you might grow most of your annual vegetables by planting seeds directly in your garden soil. However, depending on where you live you might not have enough time to get a crop (or a specific variety) to mature in the growing season that you have. This is because they are either sensitive to the cooler early season temperatures, or they just need a longer period of time to get to harvest.

As a result, you might have to start plants indoors (transplants) to gain the weeks or months of extra time that are needed. Alternatively, you may buy transplants that have been grown in a greenhouse. Transplants are actively growing young plants that are typically planted out when the risk of frost and cold temperatures has passed.

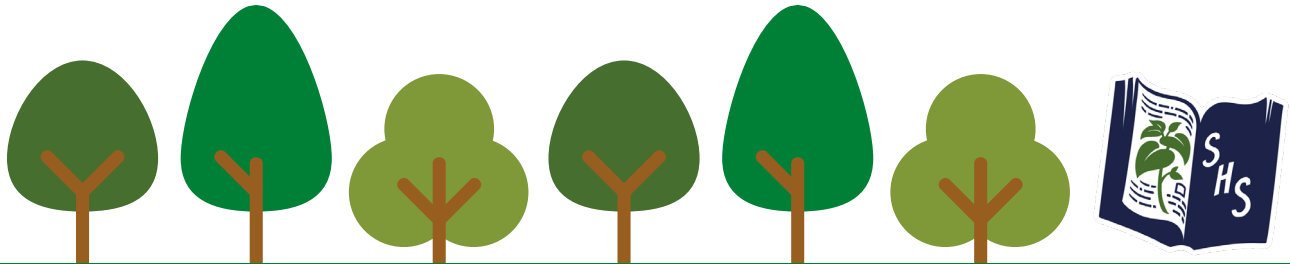
Some crops could go either way, leaving with the debate of whether to start them as seeds directly in the garden, or whether you will use transplants. You might do both, spreading out your harvest period. Regardless, there are advantages and disadvantages to growing a garden from seed or using transplants.

### Seeds

- ✓ Fast and simple
- ✓ Inexpensive
- ✓ Easy to try a wide variety (within reason)
- ✓ Flexible to region
- ✓ Easy to get a lot of plants planted
- ✗ Need soil that is smooth and is free from lumps/chunks/debris
- ✗ Need soil that will allow the seed to take up water and emerge without difficulty (no crust)
- ✗ Getting uniform spacing and depth can be hard
- ✗ Thinning may be needed to get a uniform spacing
- ✗ Sensitive to spring conditions (temperature & water)
- ✗ Sensitive to attack by diseases and insects

### Transplants

- ✓ Avoid most of the early season weather issues
- ✓ Soil doesn't need to be as fine – can tolerate some chunkiness
- ✓ More options for crops and varieties (gain weeks of growth before placement in the ground)
- ✓ Spacing is predictable and uniform
- ✓ Harvest dates are fairly predictable
- ✗ If growing yourself – need growing space, light, materials, time, etc.
- ✗ Higher cost – time, labour, materials, etc.
- ✗ Loss of plants is more dramatic (since you spent time and money to get them planted)
- ✗ If buying plants, it may be hard to find a wide selection of varieties in your local area






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## Vegetables commonly\* grown from seed or transplants

Vegetable Crop	Seed	Transplant	Vegetable Crop	Seed	Transplant
Beans (snap)	✓	✗	Melons	✗	✓
Beets	✓	✗	Onions (bulb)	✓	✓
Brussels sprouts	✗	✓	Parsnips	✓	✗
Cabbage	✓	✓	Peas	✓	✗
Carrots	✓	✗	Peppers (bell/hot)	✗	✓
Cauliflower	✗	✓	Pumpkins	✓	✓
Corn	✓	✗	Radishes	✓	✗
Cucumbers	✓	✓	Rutabaga/turnips	✓	✗
Eggplants	✗	✓	Spinach	✓	✗
Kale	✓	✗	Swiss chard	✓	✗
Kohlrabi	✓	✓	Tomatoes	✗	✓
Lettuce (head)	✓	✓	Winter squash	✗	✓
Lettuce (leaf)	✓	✗	Zucchini	✓	✓
Lettuce (Romaine)	✓	✓			

\*common = most often grown from this source

\*\* While the choices listed are for the MOST common, most vegetables can be grown from transplants, if that is the preference of the grower

