

SASKATOON SEED EXCHANGE GUIDE

A partnership between



ABOUT THE SEED EXCHANGE

The Saskatoon Seed Exchange runs February to October. Visit any Saskatoon Public Library location to donate, exchange or collect seeds for your garden, free of charge. Seeds can be picked up from February to June and donated from February to October.

The seeds in this exchange have been donated by local businesses, gardeners and seed savers. Funding for this project was provided by EcoFriendly Sask. CHEP tests the seeds for germination when possible but can make no assurances of the viability or quality of the seeds in this exchange.

We accept donations of all types of garden seeds, except those regulated by law (e.g., controlled substances, invasive weeds, commercial seeds, etc.) or that have a pesticide coating.

This guide provides basic information on planting and growing seeds for common

vegetable crops. To learn more about saving seeds, access the excellent resources on the Seeds of Diversity website: seeds.ca/learn/seed-saving. If you have more questions on how to plant and save your seeds, or on gardening in general, you're encouraged to search for information online, borrow materials from the library, or contact CHEP.

Note for transplanting: If you have started seedlings indoors, you can prepare them for planting outdoors by reducing water and putting the plants outdoors for increasingly longer timeframes three to seven days before transplanting.

SEEDING INSTRUCTIONS & GROWING TIPS

Lettuce

Direct sow or start seeds in small pots four to six weeks before the last spring frost date. Plant seeds about ¼ inch deep or on the surface where the soil can be kept moist. Seeds can be densely sown for baby leaf lettuce that you will harvest frequently. For head lettuce or other large leaf varieties, thin plants to about 10–12 inches apart. Space rows for all types 18–36 inches apart.

For continuous harvest, sow additional seeds every two weeks in the spring. Plants require regular watering so that the leaves don't become bitter.

Beans

Plant bean seeds ¼ inch deep, directly into the soil after last frost (end of May).

Pole beans like full sun and will climb to reach maximum sunlight. Plant about six inches apart and near a structure, or trellis support. They take longer to reach maturity (75+ days). Deeply water when soil is dry.

Bush beans also require full sun and reach maturity in 50–55 days. Once they start to produce, bush beans should be harvested regularly (every two to four days). Plant bush bean seeds three inches apart in rows 24 inches apart.

Peas

Pea seeds can be planted early in the season, as soon as the soil can be worked (early to mid-May). Plant seeds 1 to 1 ¼ inch deep and about two inches apart. Plant in rows spaced 12–24 inches apart. Keep seeds watered consistently for good germination.

Once germinated, peas will need a fence or trellis to climb anywhere between two and eight feet tall, depending on the variety. Water sparsely, unless dry, then water periodically. Keep bed weeded to avoid fragile roots.

Tomatoes

In our climate, tomatoes need to be transplanted—our growing season is not long enough to directly seed tomatoes in the ground. In March, plant seeds 0.5 to 1 cm deep in small pots. Keep watered and near a light source until after the last spring frost. Plant outdoors in a sunny spot.

Transplant tomatoes into the garden about 24 inches apart. Plant deeply, up to the first set of leaves. Indeterminate tomatoes need a trellis or tomato cage for support.

Peppers

In our climate, peppers need to be transplanted—our growing season is not long enough to directly seed peppers in the ground. Plant seeds in small pot about ¼ inch deep in early March. Keep watered and near a light source until ready for transplant after last frost (late May).

Transplant peppers into the garden about 18 to 24 inches apart. Peppers are also a good plant for container gardening, so that they can be moved indoors overnight if there is a risk of frost. Peppers need at least six to eight hours of sunlight per day. If the climate is warm, water every day.

Carrots

Plant carrot seeds directly in the garden. These tiny seeds only need to be just buried, about ¼ inch deep. Carrot seeds need to be kept moist to germinate, and need to be watered gently, since they aren't planted deep.

It's important to thin the carrots out so they have room to grow. Thin to two to five inches between plants once they're sprouted and have a few leaves. Carrots need well-worked soil for their tap roots to grow straight. If they hit a rock or compacted soil, you will get a stunted carrot with many arms or legs at harvest time!

Beets

Plant beet seeds directly in the garden. Sow seeds ½ inch deep, with spacing between rows of 12 to 18 inches, and water regularly. Each beet seed is a multigerminant seed, meaning they are actually multiple seeds naturally fused together. This means when you plant one beet seed, two, three or even five plants may grow! Thin plants to six inches between plants, or allow a group of three plants to grow together, but leave 12 inches between the next group of three. Young, tender beet greens can be eaten, as well as the roots.

Cucumbers

Cucumbers can be started indoors or directly seeded outside. Plants are very sensitive to frost, so wait until soil is warm to direct seed, and until the risk of frost has passed for transplanting. Plant ½ inch deep, leaving 12 inches between plants. Bush varieties of cucumbers are best suited to container gardening. Other varieties of cucumbers develop long vines and take up less groundspace if they are supported by a trellis. Cucumbers are mostly water and can become bitter if they aren't watered regularly. Planting flowers near your cucumbers will encourage pollinators to visit, which will help more evenly shaped fruit to develop.