



# Spring Gardening

## I. When to Start a Spring Garden in Tucson.

### a. Late Winter/Early Spring.

- i. Mid-February through mid-March is the start of the fall planting season. With protection, a few warm season plants can be planted at this time.**
- ii. Onions and Potatoes are planted in January followed by tomatoes in mid-Feb. Early March beans and corn are planted, followed by heat loving crops like squash, eggplant, peppers, melons, okra and more.**



### b. Optimum Spring planting period.

- i. The month of March best time to plant most warm season vegetables, most warm season vegetables can be planted during this period.**
- ii. The average last date for frost for Tucson is March 15<sup>th</sup>.**
- iii. Some crops, like melons, okra, and sweet potatoes do best planted in April or May.**

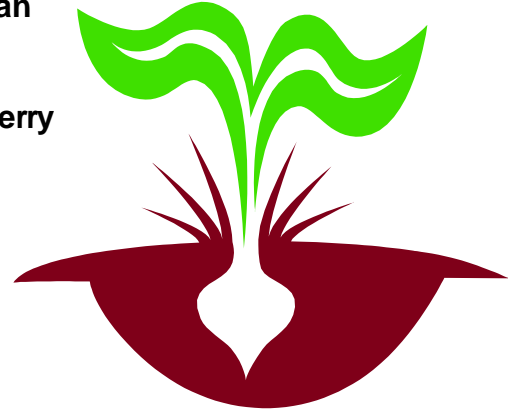
### c. Summer/Monsoon.

- i. Most crops should be planted by May 15 at the latest**
- ii. Avoid planting in the month of June.**
- iii. A second planting of summer crops can begin as soon as Monsoon starts in Early- Mid July.**

II. What to plant in your Spring Garden garden.

a. Nightshades

- i. Tomatoes – Small varieties with the shortest days to harvest will do best.**
- ii. Eggplant – Look for Asian types, but most all do well.**
- iii. Peppers – Plant your favorite!**
- iv. Potatoes – Technically a cool season crop, potatoes can be difficult to grow. Try red types for more success.**
- v. Others – Check out “chichiquelite” or Garden Huckleberry from Native Seeds Search**



b. Squash

- i. Summer Squash: Zucchini and Patty Pan**
- ii. Winter Squash: Pumpkins, acorns, and butternuts**
- iii. C. moschata varieties most resistant to pests**
- iv. Start early for good harvest**

c. Melons

- i. Melons prefer warmer temps**
- ii. Smaller is better.**
- iii. Armenian cuc's do best**

d. Beans and Corn

- i. Plant Bush Beans in March and Pole Beans in April**
- ii. Bush beans one harvest, pole beans continual harvest.**
- iii. Plant Corn in March and again during Monsoon**
- iv. Corn needs lots of space and protection.**

e. Warm season annual herbs and other crops

- i. All basil types thrive in the heat**
- ii. Cover Crops: Sesbania, Buckwheat, cowpea.**
- iii. Sesame, shiso, Malabar spinach.**
- iv. Flowers: Cosmos, zinnia, marigold, sunflower**

### III. Maintaining your Summer garden.

a. Weather – **Sun protection may be necessary for the summer garden. Consider using a 40% shade cloth if plants appear to be damaged.**

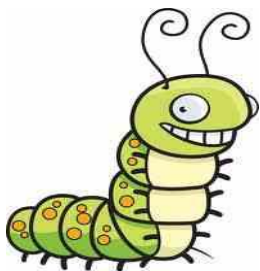
i. **Water deeply and infrequently to a depth of 12-18". Never water more than 1x a day.**

ii. **Use alfalfa hay mulch to protect the soil**

iii. **Grow tall plants like okra, sunflower, sorghum, and corn on the west side of your garden.**

iv. **Grow vining plants like pole beans or Malabar spinach up a trellis for shade.**

#### b. Insects



i. **Tobacco Hornworm – Very common during the summer and early fall months. Use a BT product once a week once damage appears or hand pick**

ii. **Squash Vine Borer – Usually appears in early spring. Cover plants with row cover until first female flowers appear. Use traps and BT for more control.**

iii. **Spider Mites: Usually attack stressed tomatoes in the driest months.**

**Spray plants with water and use shade cloth to increase humidity. Grow healthy plants!**

#### c. Birds

i. **Bean and Corn sprouts are a bird delicacy. Use row covers, or cloches to protect young sprouts. Once plants reach about 5", the birds do not bother them**

