

Your Quick Guide to

Succession Planting

Getting the most out of your garden this year!



About Us

BBB Seed is a small, family-owned company based in Boulder, Colorado that specializes in the distribution of wildflower seeds, heirloom and organic heirloom vegetable seeds and native grasses.

Content for this eBook has been provided by Sandy Swegel and Chris McLaughlin. Images are sourced on our website at <http://www.bbbseed.com>



What is Succession Planting?

In agriculture, succession planting refers to several planting methods that increase crop availability during a growing season by making efficient use of space and timing.

Succession planting is often used in organic farming. Multiple cropping describes essentially the same general method. A catch crop refers to a specific type of succession planting, where a fast-growing crop is grown simultaneously with, or between successive plantings of, a main crop.

Inside

Mid-Summer:
Start Your
Seeds Again

Days to
Maturity

Succession
Planting – Part 2

What to
Unplant

Broccoli Salad
Recipe

Two Mid-
Summer Tasks

Mid-Summer: Start Your Seeds Again

This time it's going to be a lot easier. You don't need lights and cold frames. You don't even have to use trays and little pots. You can put the seeds directly into the earth. You don't need much time. Seeds germinate in warm soil really fast. All you really do need this time of year is water. Seeds you start mid-summer are at risk of germinating and then drying out, so you have to remember to sprinkle them daily and keep the soil moist. But that's about it.

Why Start Seeds Now?

- The least romantic reason is to Save Money.
- The second least romantic reason is to Save Time.
- The romantic reason is Beauty and Abundance.

Veggies

Lettuces. In most gardens your lettuces and even spinach has bolted and gone to seed. You're probably trying to salvage individual leaves here and there, but they are pretty bitter because of the heat. Seeding new beds will give you young sweet leaves and plants that will feed you well into Fall and even Early Winter.

Cold Hardy Greens. The key to being able to eat out of the winter garden is to have big plants with enough leaves to feed you all winter. Chards and Kale and Spinach seeded now will be big enough come Fall that even in cold climates you can pile leaves on them and harvest from under the snow. But you need big plants because come October and November the plants aren't going to be re-growing much.

Peas. Peas germinate and grow easily this time of year. By the time they reach maturity, the chill of Fall nights will make them sweet and yummy. In Colorado we kind of got cheated out of our peas this year because it became so hot so fast, the peas dried up. But we have a second chance.

Root crops. Carrots and beets planted in summer have time to grow to maturity and wait in the soil until cooling Fall weather turns them into sugar. As long as the ground isn't frozen solid, you can continue to harvest delectable root veggies that taste much better than the spring and summer harvests.

Herbs. Parsley and thyme are among the many herbs you can harvest all year. Thyme can be frozen solid. Even parsley that has frozen will plump and be bright green on warm sunny winter days.

Perennials

You know the adage about perennials. First they sleep, then they creep, then they leap. Perennials need their first year to establish roots and many don't even make flowers until the second year. Perennials that you seed now will still consider this their first year and then be ready to bloom next year. If you wait until next spring to plant perennial seed.... you won't get flowers until a year later. Planting perennials is one of the thriftiest things you can do in your gardens. Foxglove and lupines are both underused magnificent bloomers in gardens. And they can easily cost \$8 each in garden centers. You can have dozens and dozens of them blooming next year if you seed now. All those flowers for cutting you've always wanted -- daisies and Echinacea and Rudbeckia -- they are simple from seed. One packet of seed will give you dozens and dozens of flowers next year.

So save an entire year of time by planting perennial seeds now. And save a bundle of money by growing your own perennials and by having greens you can pick from for the next six months.



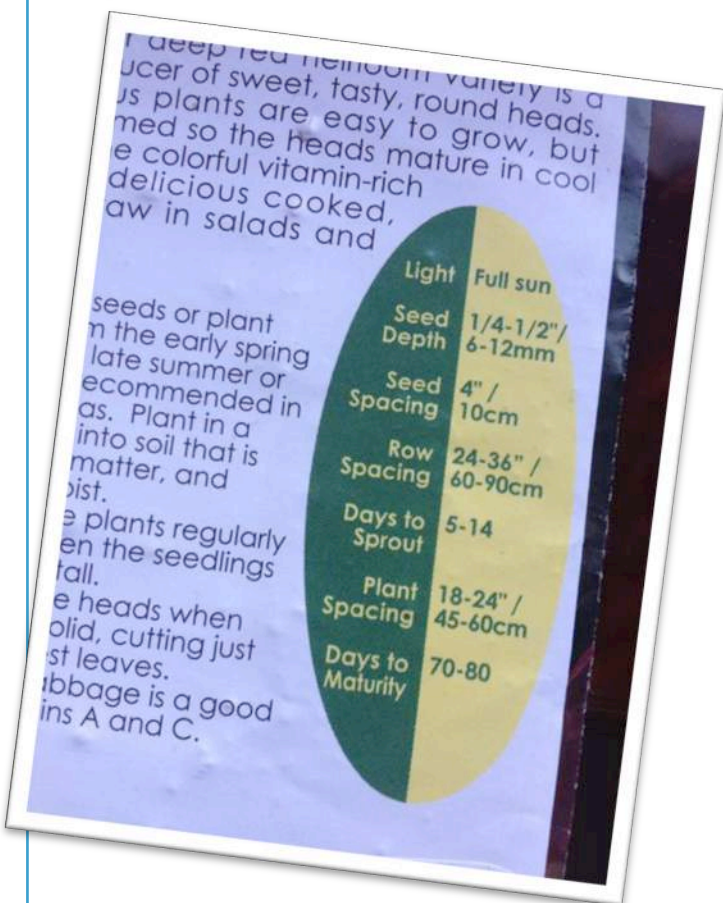
Succession Planting – Part 1

Days to Maturity

One of the challenges in the home vegetable garden is the cycle most gardeners experience of feast or famine...Either nothing's ready to harvest or you have so much of a single crop all at one time that lots of good food ends up going to waste. Succession planting is the common way to manage the garden, staggering plantings over several weeks instead of just one big planting that first nice warm day. An even easier way to stagger your harvests instead of going out every weekend to plant again is to plant different varieties of the vegetable...each of which has a different time to harvest. On the back of every seed packet, there's a little bit of vital information "days to maturity."

Surprisingly, not every variety of a vegetable takes the same period of time to be ready to eat. Taking my spring favorite, the green pea, the labels reveal that Alaska Pea is an early pea and is ready to eat in only 55 days. At the other end of the spectrum, Green Arrow is a late-season pea...It takes 68 days to ripen. Dwarf Gray, the pretty pink-flowered oriental pea, is ready right in the middle at 59 days. If you plant all three varieties on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th and allowing some time for germination, by the last week in May, the Alaska will be ready for eating. In early June, you'll still be getting some Alaska but the Dwarf Grays will be ripening. Another week or so and the Green Arrows finally start. You can keep the harvest going even longer by making sure to keep the peas picked...so they keep making new peas. After a good five weeks of peas, you'll be ready for something new.

You can apply this technique to any vegetable...If you plant several varieties of lettuces on the same day, the loose varieties will be ready first. Then the slower heading varieties will begin plumping out and finally, a sturdy late-season lettuce like Black-Seeded Simpson that can handle a little heat, will round out the season. An even easier way to plant lettuce is to plant a mix like the Heirloom Blend which includes several different kinds of lettuces with different maturities all in the same packet. You can extend lettuce even longer by harvesting with a cut and come again method....Bring your scissors and cut off what you need for your salad. The plant will regrow for next week's salad. So just a little advanced planning with the backs of your seed packets will keep a nice steady supply of perfect fresh "local" vegetables on your table. Fresh lettuce right from the garden is something beautiful to dream about during these cold winter days.





Succession Planting – Part 2

Along with Succession Planting by using varieties that have different times to maturity, there are two more easy kinds of Succession Planting you can use to you have a steady source of the best tasting food and to make the best use of your space.

Plant the same crop at intervals.

The seed packet again gives you the information you need. It says things like “plant at two week intervals.” This is a great idea for crops like lettuces and carrots and beets or similar crops that just taste best when young. If you plant all your carrots at once, you'll have nice young carrots mid season but by the end of the season, you'll be pulling big gnarly carrots out of the ground. Sometimes these can taste great and sometimes they get too woody. Likewise, you're going to want to have fall carrots because they get so sweet when the weather gets cooler. If you planted all your carrots in May, you're either going to run out of them, or the stress they went through during the heat of summer will have made them tough.

You can help yourself to remember to plant at intervals by picking specific calendar dates. We often pick the 1st and the 15th of each month as days to plant again.

Plant two or more crops in succession.

This technique is especially good for people with limited space or who practice square-foot gardening. You start a cool season crop such as

greens or radishes in an area. When they are ready, you harvest and eat them, and then you plant a summer crop such as corn or beans in that spot. It's like having twice the garden space. Sometimes I'll “interplant” crops such as green onions or carrots and tomatoes. Tomato plants stay small until the heat of summer kicks in, so I'll plant green onions and carrots in front of the tomato plants. By the time the tomatoes start to get really big, I will have already harvested the onions and carrots and the tomatoes have lots of room. The more things that are planted and growing in an area, the fewer weeds you'll have to pull. And that's always a good thing. So keep an eye out...if you're pulling up a crop that's finished, plant something new.

Crops to plant every two weeks:

- Beans
- Carrots
- Corn
- Green Onions
- Lettuce
- Spinach

Crops to plant one after the other:

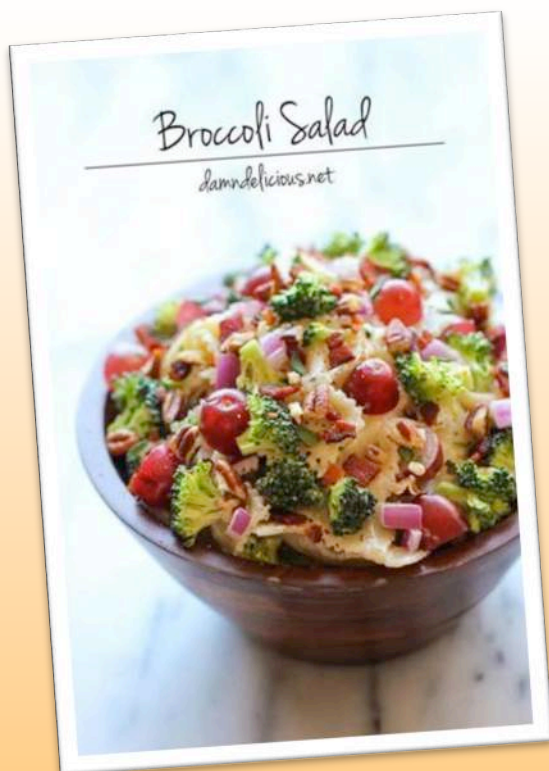
- Peas followed by Corn
- Radish followed by Zucchini
- Green Onions followed by Peppers
- Cilantro followed by Beans

What to Unplant

From a market farming perspective, you grow greens to harvest a lot of food quickly. For example, if you seed Arugula early and harvest by cutting them a few inches above the soil level (when they are big enough), then let them grow again and the cycle repeats. Plants grown like this produce a lot of food, but they also get tired and worn out. The plant itself is depleted. If you want to keep eating from your garden, you have to **unplant** the less productive plants.

Gardeners are often loath getting rid of plants. They feel sorry for them. They've come to know them as friends. But there is a time and season for every plant and a good gardener learns to be a little ruthless. If you want to have succession gardening, you have to create the empty space for the next plant. It may seem harsh, but you have to declutter and make space for new growth!

Broccoli Salad



Ingredients

8 ounces farfalle pasta
6 slices bacon, diced
1 head broccoli, cut into florets and finely chopped
2 cups seedless red grapes, halved
1/3 cup diced red onion
1/4 cup chopped pecans
For the dressing
1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/3 cup red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions

To make the dressing, whisk together mayonnaise, Greek yogurt, vinegar, sugar, thyme, salt and pepper, to taste, in a small bowl; set aside.

In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta according to package instructions; drain well.

Heat a large skillet over medium high heat. Add bacon and cook until brown and crispy, about 6-8 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate.

In a large bowl, combine pasta, bacon, broccoli, grapes, red onion, pecans and Greek yogurt dressing.

Serve immediately.

Prep Time 10 minutes

Cook Time 10 minutes

Two Mid-Summer Tasks

July can be hot in the garden. If you've kept up with weeding earlier in the season, there may not be too much work outside of harvesting veggies. Two tasks are important now.

Fertilize Plants that have been working hard.



Tomatoes

Because who doesn't want lots of tomatoes and the plants are growing like crazy in the summer heat. Fertilize with a liquid organic bloom fertilizer.

Roses

Because they just finished their big summer grand blooming and will rest a bit, you'll want another big flourish as soon as the weather cools a bit. Choose organic granular fertilizers although if there are dogs in the yard that try to eat the blood meal and bone meal in them, you'll need to use a liquid.



Greens & Other Vegetables

The chard and kales have been working hard - treat them to a nice kelp foliar spray. It also makes the garden smell like ocean breezes!



Start Seeds for Your Fall Garden

This is hard to remember in the summer heat. But now is the time to start broccoli and cauliflower plants so they'll be ready to mature and sweeten in crisp fall nights.

And if you like peas.... it's a good time to get them started again. Of course, you should always keep up your succession planting.... keep putting in new plants or seeds where you're pulling old ones out.