PNW GARDENING



A Pocket Guide for New Growers by

Linda Fenstermaker

West Coast Sales Representative at Osborne Quality Seeds

Table of Contents

The Joy of Growing Food	. 3
It's All About the Seeds	. 4
What to Do With Your Seeds	. 5
How to Select the Best Seeds	. 6
Growing by Season: Spring	. 7
Growing by Season: Summer	. 8
Growing by Season: Fall	. 9
Growing by Season: Winter	10



The Joy of Growing Food

Let's learn to grow our own food again! As life has become fast-paced and more digital, there is a comfort and unique joy in getting your hands in the dirt. There is nothing quite like the feeling of excitement and accomplishment when eating a vegetable that you grew yourself.

As a former farmer and a current seed salesperson at Osborne Quality Seeds, friends have always asked me when to grow what. At this moment in time, when we are forced to slow down and spend more time at home, people are turning more and more to growing their own food.

So, here is a little pocketbook guide to help you on this journey. Although the specific recommendations are for the PNW, it can be adapted to different growing regions with special attention to frost dates and by adjusting the timing of plantings accordingly. For beginning growers, make sure to look for the green Osborne ribbon symbol next to our go-to varieties that grow especially well in the PNW.



It's All About the Seeds

Types of Seeds

- Op or Open Pollinated: Seeds can be saved, many are older varieties that are more 'heirloom' in type/taste/yield.
- F1 or Hybrid: Generally newer and with more disease resistances, potentially higher yields, cannot save seed.
- Organic: Seeds grown in organic farming systems, certified by USDA or other certifiers.
- Untreated: Seeds grown in conventional farming systems, not treated with anything additional, allowed in organic farming if organic seed isn't available.
- Treated: Not allowed in organic farming, seeds are grown conventionally and later treated with chemical fungicides, requires gloves and mask to handle.



What to Do With Your Seeds

Direct seeding:

- This is when you seed directly into your garden bed using your fingers or a push seeder.
- Root crops perform best when direct seeded because their roots are sensitive to movement (carrots, beets, parsnips, radishes).
- Greens, babyleaf lettuce, and spinach are also better direct seeded because they are planted so close together and grow so quickly.



Starting seeds indoors to transplant later:

- This is when you start seeds in trays, small pots or eggshell cartons indoors before transplanting outside as baby plants.
- Plants that grow slower or need extra attention.
- Plants that need to be started inside earlier before the ground outside is ready.
- The best environment is a small greenhouse, which can be easily made with PVC piping and thin, clear plastic. Other options are to set up lights or put trays in a warm, sunny window.

How to Select the Best Seeds

Look closely at the seed details:

- Days to maturity (DTM) This is especially important for hot crops like peppers, corn, and melons because our short, cooler summers months may not be long enough for some varieties to come to full maturity. Look for shorter days to maturity for these crops.
- Disease resistances If you've noticed a certain disease in the past, choosing varieties with resistance to the disease may help you have a successful crop. HR is high resistance to a particular disease and IR is intermediate resistance.
- Short day vs. long day Some crops like onions, fennel and radicchio are day-length sensitive, which means they won't grow correctly if the wrong type is planted at the wrong day-length time. Make sure to look for long-day varieties for late spring/summer and short-day varieties for fall/winter.
- Main season vs. shoulder season Other crops have varieties that perform better in main season (summer) or shoulder season (fall/spring). Cool-season crops like lettuce, broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower have varieties that are bred for different seasons, so you can have a continuous harvest by growing appropriate varieties.



Growing by Season: Spring*

Harvesting:

- If you have some greenhouse or some plastic-covered spaces, you could be harvesting baby greens, arugula, radishes, green onions, spinach and pak choi.
- Outdoors: Hardy spinach, small leaves from overwintered kale/collards, collard/kale raab, perennial herbs (chives, thyme, sage), late-season radicchio.
- If you have some greenhouse or covered spaces, you could be harvesting baby greens, arugula, radishes, green onions, spinach, and pak choi.

Seeding:

- Outdoors radishes, baby greens, arugula, spinach, carrots, beets.
- Outdoors after last frost beans, winter squash, pumpkins, sunflowers, potatoes, cilantro, dill, parsnips.
- Indoors early spring onions, tomatoes, peppers (grow slow, need heat and sunlight/grow lights, need lots of care).
- Indoors early spring to mid-spring lettuce, kale, collards, cauliflower, broccoli, green onions, fennel.
- Indoors mid-spring to transplant out after last frost winter squash, pumpkins (can also be direct seeded after last frost), cucumbers, zucchini, basil, flowers, chard (to plant after last frost).

^{*}For our purposes, this is generally early March to early June.

Growing by Season: Summer*

Harvesting:

- Early summer greens, lettuce, spinach, radishes, green onions.
- Mid-summer summer lettuce, fennel, beans, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, collards, beets, carrots, zucchini, cucumbers, tomatoes, early peppers, cabbage. Warm-season herbs: dill, cilantro, and basil. Cool-season herbs: parsley, thyme, and sage.
- Late summer onions, potatoes, winter squash, pumpkins, beets, carrots, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, tomatoes, lettuce, fennel, kale, collards, herbs, melons, watermelon, corn.

Seeding:

- Outdoors late-season storage carrots, beets, fall spinach.
- Indoors late-season storage brassicas, radicchio, overwintering brassicas (need to be transplanted by mid - late July, August for overwintering varieties), corn salad to be planted out by October.



*For our purposes, this is generally early June to mid/end of September

Growing by Season: Fall*

Harvesting:

- Pre-first frost winter squash, pumpkins, last of tomatoes and peppers, potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, spinach, carrots, beets, leeks (these three will be ok with light frosts, which will sweeten them with the cool weather).
- Post-first frost kale, collards, radicchio, hardy perennial herbs.

Seeding:

• Indoor crops like from early spring, not really any transplanting except for garlic or overwintering vegetables.



^{*}For our purposes, this is generally October to the end of November.

Growing by Season: Winter*

Harvesting:

- Outdoors kale, collards, radicchio, herbs, late season leeks, parsnips, corn salad.
- In greenhouse or covered space greens, arugula, pak choi, green onions, spinach.

Seeding:

- Early crops for greenhouse or covered space greens, spinach, radishes, arugula, pak choi, green onions.
- For early transplants peas (can be direct seeded in late February), tomatoes, peppers, onions, eggplant, celeriac.



Eating From Storage:

Carrots, beets, celeriac, potatoes, winter squash, pumpkins, radicchio, cabbage.