

In The Dirt: February NC

February in the NC Piedmont/Foothills is still deep in the cool season — average last frost is mid-April, so this is early days, but a handful of very cold-hardy crops can go in, especially toward month's end.

Direct-seed late February (cold-hardy, can handle frost):

- Peas (English, snap, snow) — late Feb is actually an even better start than March in mild years, since peas like cool soil
- Spinach
- Lettuce (with row cover protection on the coldest nights)
- Radishes
- Turnips
- Kale
- Collards
- Carrots (can start late month if soil is workable, though germination is slower in cold soil)

Not yet — hold off:

- Beets, chard, and onion seed do better starting in March when soil's a bit warmer.
- Anything warm-season (beans, squash, corn, cucumbers) — far too early, no exceptions.

Not really a seeding month otherwise: February is more of a prep-and-plan month than a planting month in this region. Main tasks:

- Starting seeds indoors — onions, and some brassicas (broccoli, cabbage) are often started indoors under lights this month for later transplanting.
- Pruning fruit trees and berry bushes while still dormant.
- Soil testing and amending beds — a great time to add compost before spring planting ramps up.
- Garden planning — mapping beds, ordering seed, planning succession schedules for spring.

Practical notes:

- Soil is often still cold and wet in February — don't work it if it's soggy, wait for a dry stretch, or you'll damage soil structure.
- If you do seed cold-hardy crops this month, row cover or a cold frame gives real insurance against hard freezes and speeds germination.