

Zone 8b Seed Starting Guide



- Plant by soil temperature, not calendar date
- Warm-season crops require heat and are started indoors
- Cool-season crops tolerate cold soil and are direct sown early
- Use month-by-month charts to stay on track

Warm-Season Seeds (Require Heat)

- Tomatoes: Start indoors Jan–Feb
 - Soil 70–85°F
 - Germination 5–10 days
 - Space 18–24 in
- Peppers: Start indoors Jan–Feb
 - Soil 75–90°F
 - Germination 7–21 days
 - Space 18 in
- Eggplant: Start indoors Jan–Feb
 - Soil 75–90°F
 - Germination 7–14 days
 - Space 18–24 in
- Cucumbers: Start indoors March or direct sow April
 - Soil 70–90°F
 - Space 24–36 in
- Squash & Pumpkins: Start indoors March or direct sow April
 - Soil 70–90°F
 - Space 3–5 ft
- Melons: Start indoors March
 - Soil 75–95°F
 - Space 3–6 ft
- Okra: Direct sow April
 - Soil 70–95°F
 - Space 12–18 in
- Corn: Direct sow April
 - Soil 65–85°F
 - Space 12 in (blocks)



Cool-Season Seeds (No Heat Required)



- Lettuce: Direct sow Jan–March • Soil 35–75°F
 - Germination 3–7 days
 - Space 8–12 in
- Spinach: Direct sow Jan–Feb
 - Soil 35–70°F
 - Germination 5–10 days
 - Space 4–6 in
- Carrots: Direct sow only
 - Soil 40–75°F
 - Germination 7–21 days
 - Space 2–3 in
- Peas: Direct sow Jan–Feb
 - Soil 40–70°F
 - Germination 7–14 days
 - Space 2 in
 - Trellis
- Brassicas: Broccoli, cabbage, kale
 - Start indoors Jan–Feb or direct sow Feb
- Root crops: Beets, radish, turnips
 - Direct sow Jan–March

Herbs, Flowers & Cold Stratification



- Start indoors or outside
 - Warm-season herbs
 - Basil, rosemary
 - Cool-season herbs
 - Parsley, cilantro, dill, thyme, oregano
 - Cool-season flowers
 - Calendula, sweet peas, alyssum
 - Warm-season flowers:
 - Sunflowers, zinnias, nasturtium
 - Cold stratification:
 - Lavender (30–40 days), Milkweed (30 days), Coneflower (30–60 days)

Month-by-Month Planting Chart (Zone 8b)



- January: Indoors
 - peppers, eggplant, brassicas; Outdoors—spinach, lettuce; Containers—protect from freezes
- February: Indoors
 - tomatoes, kale; Outdoors—carrots, beets, peas; Containers—deep pots for roots
- March: Indoors
 - cucurbits (short start); Outdoors—greens, beans (late); Containers—transplant young
- April: Transplant
 - tomatoes, peppers; Direct sow—okra, squash, corn; Containers—tomatoes 10–15 gal
- May–July: Direct sow
 - melons, pumpkins, beans; Focus—mulch, water; Containers—watch moisture