

Seeds versus Transplants



Starting plants from seed can initially be less expensive. Seed packets can be purchased from most home improvement and even grocery stores for \$2-4 each. There's also the cost of the seed-starting mix, containers and labels, but you can grow a lot of plants with minimal cost.

Transplants are often sold as four to six young plants in a pack. A pack of four may cost \$3 - \$4 depending on plant variety, but they already have established roots. This gives the gardener a jumpstart on the growing season without having to nurture tender seedlings.

It is important to note the proper timing for starting seeds or transplanting into the garden because of the impact of temperature. When the garden calendar says you can "direct sow" at a certain date, this means it is generally safe to start seeds for that vegetable variety in the garden soil. If the garden calendar states you can transplant at a certain date, that means it is time to move transplants that were started indoors or purchased at a garden center into the garden beds. This time of year, the garden calendar often states you can "start seeds indoors". This is for gardeners who wish to grow their own transplants to later be moved into the garden when the weather warms.

Some plants are recommended to start from seed while others are recommended as transplants. Root vegetables, such as carrots, turnips and beets tend to not transplant well. In these cases, direct-seeding into the garden is safest.

Cole crops such as broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and Brussels sprouts can successfully be transplanted into the garden. In fact, transplanting is preferred so the plants will mature before the heat arrives and slows down production.

Peppers and tomatoes are two examples where transplanting is a better option. If we waited to start these plants from seed in the garden when the weather is warm enough to safely grow, our harvest would be significantly delayed. By transplanting, the plants can reach maturity sooner resulting in an earlier harvest.



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