***Cool Weather Vegetables***

With spring right around the corner, it is time to plant the first of the cool weather vegetables. Our changing weather makes it hard to predict just when to plant. February seemed like spring and who knows what is in store before that last of the killing frosts. Tulsa Master Gardeners provides a guide to garden planting. This guideline shows the window that best predicts when to plant certain seeds. Gardeners can still plant early seed crops through mid-March, so put on those garden gloves and let’s begin.

First, do a little research. Then:

* Rotate crops. Remember what was planted where last year. This rotation helps alleviate garden pests.
* Perform a soil test through the Tulsa County Extension Office if time allows.
* Buy high quality and name brand seeds to lessen plant diseases and ensure good plants.
* Mulch and enrich soil.
* Know the soil needs of each vegetable.
* Know how often to water each maturing plant.
* Read the back of the seed packet before planting to know how deep to plant and how much spacing to allow.
* Have some natural insecticidal products available to reduce insect pests. Bt is a good product to reduce plant diseases
* Use Integrated pest management (IPM) principles whenever possible

Start a list of cool weather vegetables that you like:

**Root Crops:**

* Beets- Highly nutritious
* Carrots- like sandy neutral soil; water 1” once a week. Thin with scissors. Mulch.
* Parsnips
* Rutabaga
* Globe onions

**Leaf Crops:**

* + Brussel Sprouts
  + Cabbage - a quick harvest
  + Cauliflower- sensitive & harder to grow; cover with outside leaves to prevent browning
  + Spinach - Fast growing, highly nutritious. Likes full sun and rich loamy well-drained soil. It is the most cold tolerant of all. Add blood meal to add nutrition. Likes dried cow or horse manure. Pick outer leaves. It will bolt when it is hot.
  + Kale - Is an easy growing member of the cabbage family. Likes fertile soil, full sun and blood meal. Wants 1” of water a week. Pick outside leaves.
  + Leaf lettuce - early producer. Grows profusely. Can be grown in containers to keep culprits away!
  + Broccoli - The most nutritious crop of all. Likes medium textured soil and good drainage. Does best in cool weather. Once established, cut the thick middle head so it will produce more side shoots. Prone to have insect problems - use insecticidal soap.
  + Green Peas - A tradition is to plant them on St. Patrick’s Day. Grows well on a trellis and really wants to be left alone!

Raise beds keep plants warmer. If cold weather is predicted after the seedlings appear, cover with cheese cloth. Use wind breaks as needed to protect plants.

Regularly inspect crops. Keep records of your early cool vegetable gardening. It’s okay to experiment. As a planting guide, remember that Tulsa County’s Hardiness Zone is 7B.

Some helpful Tulsa Master Gardener fact sheets include:

[HLA-6004](http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1092/HLA-6004web.pdf) (Oklahoma Garden Planting Guide)

[HLA-6017](http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1384/HLA-6017web2013.pdf) (growing broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower)

[HLA-6032](http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1386/HLA-6032web.pdf) (Vegetable varieties in Oklahoma)

[EPP-7313](http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1317/EPP-7313web2015.pdf) (Home Vegetable Garden Insect Pest Control)

[EPP-7666](http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1393/EPP-7666web2014.pdf) (Diseases of Leafy Crucifer Vegetables)

For questions, call the Tulsa County Master Gardener Phone Line at 918-746-3701.