

When to Start Seeds Inside

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Start seeds 10 – 12 weeks before setting out as transplants:	Slow growing flowers and vegetables: geraniums, petunias, lobelia, snapdragons, onions, leeks, celery
Start seeds 6 – 8 weeks before setting out as transplants:	Parsley*, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant *Benefits from pre-soaking seed overnight
Start seeds 4 – 6 weeks before setting out as transplants:	Faster-growing flowers such as marigolds Asian greens, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, Swiss chard
Start seeds 2 – 4 weeks before setting out as transplants:	Fastest-growing flowers such as zinnias. Cucumbers*, squash*, melons*, basil, corn* *Transplant carefully to avoid disturbing roots

Determine when you want the seedlings available for transplanting, based on the table of outside planting dates. Then count backwards to know when to start the seeds inside. Don't forget to check for special requirements such as vernalization, soaking, scarification, etc.

When to Plant Outside

Frost-tolerant annual flowers: Cornflowers (bachelor buttons), pansies, snapdragons	Plant outside between April 15 and May 15, depending on weather forecasts and your elevation. May also be grown for fall. Plant in July. Plants will mature in the cooler fall weather. Make sure vegetables have time to produce a crop before October 10, the average first frost date for Colorado Springs. (Add/subtract a day for every 100 feet change in elevation above/below 6,000 ft.)
Cool weather annual flowers: Sweet alyssum, calendulas, sweet peas	Plant outside around May 15, the average last frost date for Colorado Springs. (Add/subtract a day for every 100 feet change in elevation above/below 6,000 ft.)
Cool weather herbs & vegetables: Beets*, Brussels sprouts, carrots*, chard, Chinese cabbage, collards, mizuna, mustard, parsnip, parsley, radishes*	

* Work best if direct seeded in the garden

**If broccoli seedlings more than three weeks old are exposed to continuous cold (<40°) temperatures, they will bolt. Bolting means that they go to seed prematurely, never growing large enough to form good-sized head. Instead, they will flower as seedlings, and your harvest will be lost.

***Spinach works best as a fall crop, as exposure to days longer than 14 hours will cause it to become bitter and bolt.