

# URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

## Growing and Harvesting in Illinois

Illinois' USDA Hardiness Zones are zones 5, 6 and 7. The zones progress in horizontal portions throughout the state, with the northern parts of Illinois being in zone 5, central Illinois is a zone 6 and southern Illinois is a zone 7. First frost dates begin in October, and last frost dates can stretch into May. Chicago's first and last frost dates are mid-October to mid-April.

### What to plant and when:

Since Illinois' USDA Hardiness Zones vary, vegetable planting schedules will vary as well.

#### Zone 5:

- **March:** Begin broccoli inside.
- **April:** Begin beets, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, kale lettuce, onions, peas, peppers, spinach and tomatoes inside. Plant broccoli outside.
- **May:** Begin beans, corn, cucumber and squash inside. Plant beets, broccoli, carrots, kale, lettuce, peas and spinach outside.
- **June:** Plant Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, onions, peppers and tomatoes outside.
- **July:** Plant corn, cucumber and squash outside. Begin beets, broccoli, kale, lettuce, peas and spinach inside.
- **August:** Plant beets, broccoli, kale, lettuce, peas and spinach outside. Begin carrots inside.
- **September:** Plant carrots outside.

#### Zone 6:

- **March:** Begin beets, broccoli,



[Illinois Planting Calendar on ufseeds.com](http://Illinois Planting Calendar on ufseeds.com)

cauliflower, kale, lettuce, onions, peas, peppers, spinach and tomatoes inside.

- **April:** Plant beets, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, lettuce, peas and spinach outside. Begin carrots outside.
- **May:** Begin beans, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, corn, cucumbers and squash inside. plant carrots, onions, peppers and tomatoes outside.
- **June:** Plant squash, beans, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, corn and cucumbers outside.
- **July:** Begin beets, broccoli and spinach inside.
- **August:** Plant beets, broccoli and spinach outside. Begin carrots, kale, lettuce and peas inside.
- **September:** Plant carrots, kale, lettuce and peas outside.

#### Zone 7:

- **February:** Begin broccoli, cauliflower and peas indoors.
- **March:** Begin beets, cabbage, carrots,



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akle, lettuce, onions, peppers, spinach and tomato indoors. Near the end of March, transplant broccoli, carrots, peas and cauliflower outdoors.

- **April:** Transplant kale, lettuce and spinach outdoors. Begin beans and Brussels sprouts indoor.
- **May:** Transplant onions, peppers and tomatoes outdoors. Begin corn, cucumbers and squash indoors.
- **June:** Transplant beans, Brussels sprouts, corn, cucumbers and squash outdoors.
- **July:** Begin cabbage indoors.
- **August:** Begin beets, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, kale, lettuce, peas and spinach indoors. Near the end of the month, transplant cabbage outdoors.
- **September:** Transplant beets, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, kale, lettuce, peas and spinach outdoors for the fall harvest.

### Illinois' soil and how it affects agriculture:

Soils in Illinois are narrowed down into eight different soil regions across the state, which are based on soil age and the type of material the soil comes from. These eight regions include Deep Loess, Loess over Illinoisan Drift, Loess over Wisconsinan Drift, Wisconsinan Drift, Wisconsinan Outwash, Wisconsinan Lacustrine, Residuum and Alluvium. Within these soil regions, soil types are present throughout the state.

Alfisols are present throughout much of the state, which is good news because these are fertile soils that are excellent for crop growth. They are typically found along the northern edge of the state, along the western border and in the southern tip of Illinois.



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Entisols are sparse throughout Illinois, as these are typically found in western, mountainous states. Entisols are sometimes able to be used for crop growth, although some types of these soils are sandy or shallow and don't hold moisture well.

Histosols aren't very common in Illinois, dotting only the northernmost border. These soils are rich in organic matter.

Mollisols are very present throughout Illinois, covering much of the northern half of the state. These soils are fertile and excellent for crop growth. These soils have a darker coloring to them.

As for pH level of the soils, much of Illinois' soils varies between mostly neutral to slightly acidic, which is what many plants thrive in. In the southern parts of the state, the soil gets more acidic with an average pH of 5.2 or 5.5.



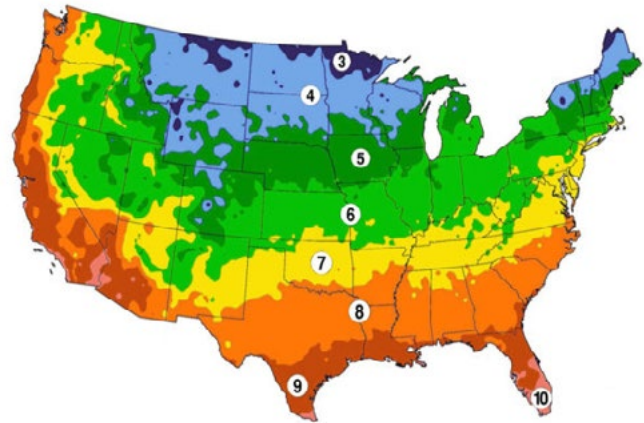
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## Average rainfall in Illinois:

In the Chicago area, average annual precipitation ranges from 36.8 inches to 39.1 inches a year. In northern Illinois, yearly precipitation ranges from 35.6 inches to 38.4 inches a year. In central Illinois, average precipitation is a little higher than other parts of the state. It ranges from 37.3 inches to 42.7 inches a year. In southern Illinois, average yearly precipitation ranges from 43.4 inches to 48.6 inches a year.

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[USDA Hardiness Gardening Zone Finder on ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)



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