

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Growing and Harvesting in Alabama

Unlike some states, Alabama has a long growing season and plenty of rural land to produce a harvest throughout the region. However, despite these two ingredients for success, planting and harvesting in Alabama takes planning and dedication, just like any other state.

What to plant and when:

Alabama ranges from zones 7 to 9 on the US Hardiness Zone map. This means that while some parts of the state may be ready for seed planting in earlier months, you may need to wait a bit for the more northern parts. Cool-season crops have a much earlier start in Alabama compared to elsewhere in the United States, and some plants like carrots and certain herbs like parsley and oregano can be grown year-round. To get a head start on the growing season, start seeds indoors 8 to 12 weeks prior to moving transplants outside. Depending on different regions of the state, Alabama's last frost dates are typically from mid-March to April and its first frost dates range from early October to November. Here is a simplified list of what vegetables to plant in different portions of the state and when:

February: Although Alabama summers bring hot weather, their winters are mild and still somewhat cold. Cool-season, hardy vegetables like cabbage, lettuce, onions, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts should be planted in February in the southern parts of the state.



[Alabama Planting Calendar on ufseeds.com](http://AlabamaPlantingCalendar.onufseeds.com)

March: Cool-season vegetables planted in February in the southern parts of the state can be planted in the northern regions as well come March, as the weather begins to warm. For the southern parts of the state, plant peppers and tomatoes in March.

April: The entire state now offers prime conditions to grow peppers, tomatoes, parsley, eggplant and sweet potatoes. Also, corn, squash, cucumbers and beans and melons can be planted.

May: The same seeds planted in April can be planted in May, as well. To prepare for the fall garden, plant cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and celery seeds in containers.

June: Spring seed planting can stretch into June, but the middle-of-the-year month also brings prime weather for planting pumpkins and sweet potato cuttings.



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July: Tomatoes can once again be planted in northern regions, and field peas, spinach and rutabagas can be planted across the state.

August: Begin planting fall crops such as Brussels sprouts, cabbage and celery. Beans, turnips and rutabagas can be planted in southern parts of the state.

September: Fall crop plantings may stretch into September as summer heat fades.

Alabama's different soils and how it affects agriculture:

There are many different soil types in Alabama. In the Limestone Valleys and Uplands area, soil is gravelly and loamy, and much of the area is cropped to soybeans and cotton. These soils are mostly on the northern border of the state and in a small stretch along the eastern side to the center of the state. In the Appalachian Plateau, much of the soil comes from sandstone or shale. This soil is mostly in the northeastern parts of the state. Corn, soybeans, tomatoes and potatoes are often grown in these areas. However, in the Piedmont Plateau areas, much of the soil is red clay and topography can range from rolling to steep. Not many crops are grown here. In the Coastal Plains, soils are derived from marine sediments and are loamy or clayey. Horticultural crops and soybeans, peanuts and corn are grown here. This area mostly comprises of the upper and lower Coastal Plains, which is majority of the middle of the state and to the western side. It also stretches up the western side of the state to the northern border. The Blackland



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Prairie area consists of a stretch of soil types through central Alabama. Its soil is dark in color and are acidic or alkaline.

How to garden best in Alabama:

Summers in Alabama are warm and humid, and soil throughout most of the state is fertile, which leads to good vegetable growth. Although the state receives an average of 40 to 50 inches of rain a year, the summertime can bring dry spells. Something to watch out for is a dry period, where you will have to give your vegetables extra water. The best time to harvest will be early morning, when temperatures haven't had the chance to rise yet.

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