

Your Garden

Sow Easy: Growing Food And Flowers From Seeds At Home

(NAPSA)—Many vegetables and flowers, especially annuals, can be sown as seeds directly into the garden. Not only can “growing your own” save gardeners money on tasty produce and colorful flowers, it can be a great way to introduce children to gardening.

Burpee horticulturalist, Chelsey Fields, says the best seeds to sow directly are large ones such as beans, cucumbers and zucchini, which are tough enough to survive in outdoor conditions.

Most root crops such as turnips, beets and radishes, leaf lettuce and other leafy greens such as spinach, Swiss chard and arugula are easy to grow outdoors from seed. Numerous annual flowers can also be direct sown—from sunflowers, sweet peas, marigolds, impatiens and foxgloves to cleome, cosmos and forget-me-nots.

“Seed” Meals

Adventurous gardeners can toss their salad even before it is planted. “To grow a carpet of ‘ready-to-snip’ salad greens, just mix three to five types of seeds, toss into prepared soil and use scissors to harvest the freshest, tastiest leaves you need for each meal,” says Fields. King Crimson, Fan Dance, Green Frills lettuces, Wildfire Arugula and Baby Leaf Spinach are excellent and will grow back at least a second time for a repeat harvest. Radishes take just three to four weeks from seed to maturity to eating size.

Fields advises that direct-sown plants will require water; full sun (six to eight hours a day); rich, well-drained soil mixed with organic matter such as compost; appropriate amounts of nutrients from compost; and, possibly, fertilizer.



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Direct-Sowing Tips

To plant, follow the directions on the seed packet. Direct-sown vegetables will take a week or two to sprout (“germinate”), depending on the weather. “Sow seeds in straight rows to make it easier to identify anything that sprouts outside the row as a weed,” advises Fields. “Many seeds can be sown throughout the summer for harvesting into the fall: ‘days to maturity’ on the seed packet will help determine the likely harvest date. Sunflowers are among the easiest and most spectacular of tall flowers and their edible seeds make a tasty snack.”

Learn More

Gardeners know that W. Atlee Burpee & Co. has supplied American home gardeners with the highest-quality seeds since 1876. To order non-GMO seeds and plants and for information, gardening ideas and “how-to” videos, visit www.burpee.com or call (800) 888-1447.