

## Vegetable Gardening During Summer (published 2025-07-19)

By Earl Hockin, Master Gardener

Most gardens in Sullivan, Washington, Hawkins, and Greene counties are in plant hardiness zone 7a or 7b. Some areas are in zone 6b. If you are not sure which zone you're in, go to <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/> and enter your zip code and the map will clearly show the hardiness zone for your location. In zone 7b and 7a there is a 50% chance that you will not have frost till after October 15<sup>th</sup>. So, check out the days to mature and add a week to be safe then subtract that number of days from October 15<sup>th</sup> to determine the date by which you need to start the warm season crops. This means you can grow fast maturing warm season vegetables and cool season vegetables starting in July.

You can plant quick maturing warm season vegetables in July through the first week or so of August. Check the maturity time listed on the seed package and ensure they will mature in fewer than 80 days. Some examples are bush beans, aka snap beans, summer squash such as zucchini and yellow squash, cucumbers, cow peas, black eyed peas, and okra which will all mature in 50 to 60 days, and cantaloupe which matures in 70 to 80 days. Also, you can plant transplants of cherry and other small varieties of tomatoes and peppers which will produce fruit in fewer than 80 days.

July and early August is also the time get started with cool season vegetables. You can direct sow seeds of beets, carrots, turnips, rutabagas, Swiss chard, kale, and collards in late July through August. In mid-July start seeds for broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower indoors for transplanting in late August. As Brussel sprouts take longer to mature, start them indoors in early July for transplanting in late August.

During hot days of July, you should shade young seedlings, and ensure the soil is kept moist. Use shade cloth or row covers to prevent bolting in the cool season plants that you are growing.

Here is a listing of fast maturing varieties that mature in fewer than 80 days and can be planted in July and early August: varieties of bush beans including Provider, Blue Lake 274, Contender, Tender Green, and Bush Blue Lake; varieties of cucumbers including Bush Pickle, Picklebush, Straight Eight, Marketmore 76, and Spacemaster. Early Pride Hybrid is a fast-maturing English variety cucumber. Progress Hybrid and Palace King are early maturing Japanese cucumbers, which are excellent for both fresh eating and pickling. Other Asian cucumbers that mature in fewer than 70 days include Suyo Long, Tasty Jade (F1), Tasty Green, Summer Dance and Korean Cucumber. All these cucumbers do best if grown on a trellis, so the cucumber grows straight and the airflow through the trellis benefits them. Some small or early maturing tomatoes grown as transplants that will mature in fewer than 70 days include Early Girl, Stupice, Celebrity, Fourth of July, and Sun Gold. Fast maturing summer squash includes Yellow Crookneck, Black Beauty Zucchini Raven Zucchini, and Golden Glory.

### Resources

For cool season crops refer to the information for East Tennessee fall planning information available in the document "Cole Crops for the Tennessee Vegetable Garden," at <https://uthort.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/228/2023/11/D59.pdf>.

For the warm season vegetables refer to the guidelines for East Tennessee in the articles at <https://uthort.tennessee.edu/vegetables-and-herbs/>

Also see "Garden Planning, Plant Preparation and Planting," at <https://uthort.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/228/2023/11/W346-B.pdf>

For more information about gardening, visit UTHORT's YouTube site for helpful videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjS3d1IkIH1OZ1Z2qPvhgfQ>

Or Washington County's YouTube site: <https://www.youtube.com/@utextensionwashingtoncounty>

### **How do I ask a question?**

If you have a question for the Master Gardeners, submit them to us on our website at [www.netmga.net](http://www.netmga.net). Click the link at the top of the page, "ASK A MASTER GARDENER" to send in your question. Questions that are not answered in this column will receive a response from a Master Gardener to the contact information you provide.

*The Master Gardener Program is offered by the University of Tennessee Extension. The purpose of the Master Gardener program is to train people as horticultural-educated volunteers. These volunteers work in partnership with the local Extension office in their counties to expand educational outreach, providing home gardeners with researched-based information.*