



One Planet Matters

Planting Timetable & Tips for Schools

Summer is the most active season for most growers, so planting schedules can be a bit tricky for schools that are closed during the months of July and August. However, there is no reason why being closed during the summer should stop you from growing an abundance of delicious produce. Here's how to make your gardening schedule fit in with your school timetable:

➤ **Choose your plants based on your climate & plant for early, continual harvests**

Planning your school garden so that it is harvestable before summer break is definitely possible, but much easier to do if you are based in a warmer region where the last frost is earlier. Cool season crops such as spinach, lettuce, beetroot and radishes which mature early are all great options for ensuring a late-Spring harvest. It is also a great idea to plant continually. You can do this with many vegetables by sowing seeds every week or two during their growing season, so that you get a constant supply of produce rather than everything coming up at once.

➤ **Use your windowsills to extend your growing season**

Growing food on your school windowsills is a great way of utilising all the space you have available. It also means that your pupils are able to watch plants as they sprout - which is both exciting and great for science lessons - and it makes it easier to remember to water young plants! You can grow plenty of food just using your windowsills, such as: cress, pea shoots, herbs, radishes, baby beetroot, edible flowers, and kale. Herbs like rosemary, oregano, thyme, and sage can also be grown almost year-round indoors! If you have a greenhouse, this will increase your growing season in the same way.

➤ **If you are leaving your garden bare over summer, make sure to mulch!**

Once you have harvested your crops, make sure you add a thick layer of mulch to your bare soil in order to lock in moisture, discourage weeds, and prevent soil erosion while your garden is left empty over the summer months. The mulch will break down gradually over the summer months, adding nutrients to your soil which will feed next year's crops!

➤ **Install an irrigation system**

Buying a drip irrigation system can be inexpensive, and will allow your garden to continue to grow even if nobody is available to water it over the summer months. These can be inexpensive and work on a timer, so that when you come back in September there is produce waiting for you.

➤ **Utilise summer youth programs & volunteers**

If your school grounds are used during the summer for youth programs, perhaps the leaders would be keen to use the opportunity for activities that your school garden offers. Otherwise, there are often local clubs or activities run by local parks, libraries, or the recreation department which operate through the summer - get in touch with them to see if they would like to utilise your outdoor space in exchange for upkeep. Another option is to send a newsletter to the parents of your pupils to work on creating a summer gardening volunteer group.

PLANTING TIMETABLE

SEPTEMBER

Leaves - komatsuna, mibuna, mizuna, mustard, rocket & lettuce	These salad leaves can be sown and harvested almost all year round apart from the coldest months of the year (Nov-Feb). As the weather gets colder, cover them with cloches, fleece or in cold frames. Begin sowing seeds into moist soil early on and then continue to sow in weekly batches for a continuous supply. The leaves of these plants can be harvested throughout their growth from when they are very small.
Overwintering veg	Overwintering vegetables, such as turnips, spinach and onion sets, can be planted now and will mature next Spring.
Spring onion	Sow seeds for harvesting next Spring.

OCTOBER

Fruit trees & bushes	You can begin planting fruit trees and bushes now - bare-root ones will be cheaper than potted.
Overwintering broad beans	In mild areas you can sow overwintering broad beans in situ. Cover broad beans with fleece or cloches to provide insulation in colder areas, as well as protection from pigeons.
Peas	Sow overwintering varieties of peas such as 'Douce Provence' or 'Meteor', but only in mild areas.
Garlic	You can start planting garlic cloves now.

NOVEMBER

Fruit trees & bushes	Buy and plant new fruit trees and bushes. Don't plant if the ground is frosted or too wet.
Garlic	Plant garlic cloves in modules inside a cold frame, or outdoors in mild areas in their final position (free-draining soils and low rainfall areas only)
Overwintering broad beans	Sow overwintering broad beans (mild areas only) outside or under cloches where the soil is well drained, or in pots in an unheated greenhouse in cold districts.

DECEMBER

Garlic	You can plant garlic as long as the soil isn't waterlogged or frozen. Or plant in modules inside a cold frame, or outdoors in mild areas in their final position (free-draining soils and low rainfall areas only)
Shallots	Plant shallots in mild areas with well-drained soil
Fruit trees & bushes	Plant new trees and bushes. Don't plant if the ground is waterlogged or frozen

JANUARY

Leafy greens	In order to get an early crop, you can begin sowing leafy green vegetables (like salad greens, or herbs such as coriander and parsley) indoors - use a greenhouse or the windowsills in your school to begin growing these seedlings and they should be ready by Spring! You can then have a longer season of growing them as they can be harvested continually until you break up for summer.
Summer cabbage	Sow indoors or under protection outdoors. These should be ready to begin harvesting in June, or even in late May in some areas
Early summer cauliflower	Sow indoors or under glass. These should be ready to plant out in March

FEBRUARY

Broad beans	Broad beans can be started indoors earlier than other beans. Choose early-producing varieties such as 'Aquadulce Claudia' and 'Witkiem Manita' to start off indoors - they should be ready by July.
Herbs	Herbs like rosemary, thyme, sage, oregano, and chives can all be sown indoors early in the year and planted out once the weather gets warmer and the threat of frost has passed.
Summer cabbage	Sow indoors or under protection outdoors.
Leafy greens	Continue sowing leafy greens indoors on your windowsills, or in a greenhouse if you have one.
Early summer cauliflower	Sow indoors or under glass early in the month. These should be ready to plant out in March.
Tomatoes	Sow indoors into pots. There are lots of fun varieties that you can choose from - from red, yellow, or orange varieties to chocolate varieties! You can also get varieties which are great for growing in baskets indoors. Harvest from July.

MARCH

Potatoes	<p>Make sure you choose an early potato variety - also called 'new' potatoes - rather than maincrop potatoes, which can only be harvested from August. There are first early varieties which can be harvested from June and July, and second early varieties which can be harvested from July.</p> <p>Recommended first early varieties include 'Accent', 'Red Duke of York', 'Lady Christl', 'Orla' and 'Rocket'. Before planting, chit the potatoes (stand with eyes upright and wait for strong green shoots to appear) in egg boxes in the classroom on a window sill. Then plant them 12cm deep and 40cm apart. Water well and cover stems with soil as they grow.</p>
Beetroot	<p>Choose early varieties such as 'Boltardy', as summer beetroots can often bolt when seeded this early in the year. Sow outside with protection. These should be ready to harvest from May.</p>
Radish	<p>These can be harvested from late April and May! Radishes are the fastest-to-harvest and are really easy to grow, making them ideal for schools.</p>
Spring onion	<p>Sow seeds for harvesting in June/July, and harvest spring onions which were planted in September.</p>
Lettuce	<p>This is another fast-producing plant which can be picked in May as loose leaves, or from mid-June as lettuce hearts.</p>
Peas	<p>Some first early pea varieties, such as 'Meteor' and 'Avola', can be sown from Autumn for harvesting in June and July.</p>
Spinach & chard	<p>Sow outdoors after the last frost, which is either in March or April. Spinach may need covering in colder weather. Sow every 3 weeks for a continuous supply. Like salad leaves, you can harvest these as they grow. Choose early producing varieties such as 'Tarp' and 'Bloomsdale' - most of these are harvested in May and June.</p>
Carrots	<p>In warmer areas of the UK, you can begin sowing carrots under cover in March. Leave 30cm between rows and thin to 2cm apart. Remember you can eat the green leafy tops! 'Early Nantes' is a good variety to sow in April, and can be harvested from July or even potentially from June.</p>
Broad beans	<p>Continue growing indoors until the weather warms, or outdoors with protection from frost. Early-producing beans may be ready for harvesting in June.</p>
Early summer cauliflower	<p>Plant out into beds - they should be ready to harvest at the end of June. Make sure you harvest them when the cauliflower heads are still firm, before the plant bolts.</p>
Tomatoes	<p>Sow indoors into pots. There are lots of fun varieties that you can choose from - from red, yellow, or orange varieties to chocolate varieties! You can also get varieties which are great for growing in baskets indoors. Harvest from July.</p>

APRIL

As above	<p>Most of the plants that can be grown in March can also be grown in April.</p> <p>It is recommended that you plant spinach before mid-April however, in order to prevent early bolting.</p>
Courgettes	You can begin sowing courgette seeds indoors into pots after the last frost. You may be able to begin harvesting from June.
Beans	After the last frost, you can plant out the beans which you have started indoors. They will need a structure to climb up, so make a trellis or wigwam from bamboo poles. Make sure you keep your beans well watered. Early-producing beans may be ready for harvesting in June.
Spinach & chard	Continue sowing outdoors every 3 or so weeks for a continuous supply. If you had frost in March, begin sowing now after the threat of frost has passed..

MAY

Carrots	Sown thinly in May, carrots can produce small roots for harvesting in July.
Beetroot	Similarly to carrots, beetroot can produce small roots for harvesting in July when sown thinly in May.
Chard	Can be grown from May for spinach-tasting leaves ready for harvesting throughout the Summer and Autumn.
Courgettes	You can plant out your courgette seedlings from late May, once all risk of frost has passed. Make sure you harden them off by either keeping them in a cold frame for a week or by putting them outside in the day and bringing them back indoors at night. You could also plant courgette seeds straight into the soil at this time, covering them with cloches or jars to protect them until they have sprouted. Be aware that courgettes need lots of space, so make sure they are around 90cm apart. They need a sunny spot and rich soil with fresh compost added. You may be able to begin harvesting in June.
Tomatoes	If you are growing outdoor varieties, plant them outdoors in 45cm intervals once they have sprouted indoors. If you are growing single-stemmed varieties, they will need a cane to support them.

JUNE & JULY

If you won't have anyone to continue growing food over the July & August summer holidays, we recommend focusing these months on harvesting and storing the produce that is ready, and then restoring and protecting your empty beds with mulch or covercrop.

If you do have people who can help tend to plants over the summer months, take a look at our [Monthly Jobs & Gardening Tips info sheet](#) to see what else you can plant now.

Learn more:

<https://charlesdowding.co.uk/sowing-and-growing-for-schools/>

<https://www.rpa.org.uk/month-by-month/june/harvest.htm>

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-12/Calendar%20A3%20FINAL.pdf>

<https://www.kew.org/read-and-watch/windowsill-veg-herbs>

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/vegetables-all-year-round#:~:text=Brassicas%20%2D%20kale%2C%20cabbage%2C%20turnips,can%20potatoes%2C%20onions%20and%20garlic.>

<https://kidsgardening.org/resources/gardening-basics-maintaining-a-school-garden-in-summer/>