

TMAPS FREE SEED LIBRARY — Crop Planning Guide

Toronto, ON · Zone 6b · Last frost: ~Apr 15 · First frost: ~Oct 15

Seed	Difficulty	Light	Balcony	Indoor	Outdoor	When to Sow (Toronto)	Take This Much	Days to Harvest	Notes
HERBS									
Basil	Easy	Full sun	✓	✓	✓	Start indoors Apr · outdoors May 24+	10–15 seeds	60–70	Loves heat. Trim to delay flowering. Key herb in South Asian, Italian & Thai cuisines.
Chives	Easy	Full/Part	✓	✓	✓	Start indoors Feb–Mar · outdoors Apr	10–12 seeds	60–90	Perennial — regrows every year. Best indoor herb. Hardy and low-maintenance.
Cilantro	Easy	Full/Part	✓	✓	✓	Direct sow Apr–May · again Sept	10–15 seeds	45–70	Bolts in heat — sow in cool season only. Key in South Asian, Mexican & Caribbean cuisines.
Parsley	Medium	Any	✓	✓	✓	Start indoors Feb–Mar (slow — soak seeds overnight first)	8–10 seeds	70–90	Takes ~3 weeks to germinate. Tolerates partial shade. Soak seeds overnight before planting.
Dill	Easy	Full sun	✓	—	✓	Direct sow May–Jun (do NOT transplant)	10–15 seeds	40–60	Deep taproot — direct sow only, never transplant. Attracts beneficial insects.
LEAFY GREENS									
Lettuce (leaf)	Easy	Full/Part	✓	✓	✓	Direct sow Apr–May · again Aug–Sept	15–20 seeds	30–50	Best beginner crop. Harvest outer leaves and it keeps producing. Avoid summer heat.
Spinach	Easy	Any	✓	✓	✓	Direct sow Mar–May · again Aug–Oct	15–20 seeds	35–45	Spring & fall only — bolts in summer. Tolerates partial shade well.
Kale	Easy	Full/Part	✓	—	✓	Start indoors Mar · direct sow Apr–May	8–12 seeds	55–75	Cold-hardy. Tastes sweeter after frost. Productive for months into fall.
Arugula	Easy	Full/Part	✓	✓	✓	Direct sow Apr–May · again Aug–Sept	15–20 seeds	25–40	Very fast and peppery. Bolts in heat — resow in late summer for fall crop.
Swiss Chard	Easy	Full/Part	✓	—	✓	Direct sow Apr–Jun	8–12 seeds	50–60	Handles heat better than spinach. Colourful stems. Productive for months.
CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT VEGETABLES									
Okra ★	Medium	Full sun only	△ (large pot)	—	✓	Start indoors late Mar · outdoors Jun 1+ (needs nights ≥60°F / 15°C)	8–10 seeds	50–65	★ Key to West African, Caribbean & South Asian cuisines. Soak seeds overnight. Needs warm nights. Use dwarf 'Cajun Delight' or 'Blondy' for containers (5+ gal). Use black plastic mulch.
CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT VEGETABLES									
Amaranth ↗	Easy	Full/Part	✓	—	✓	Direct sow after May 15 (last frost)	10–15 seeds	90–120	↗ Ancient crop of the Americas — 8,000+ years of cultivation. Edible seeds & leaves. Stunning magenta/gold plumes. Drought tolerant. Grows 2–4 ft. Leave seedheads for birds.
Bitter Melon ★	Hard	Full sun only	—	—	✓	Nick seed + soak 24 hrs · start indoors late Apr · outdoors May 24+	4–6 seeds	70–90	★ Essential in South Asian, SE Asian & East Asian cuisines. Needs trellis, full sun & long hot season. Nick the hard seed coat before soaking. Use black plastic mulch in Toronto.
INDIGENOUS CROPS — Three Sisters (Haudenosaunee)									
Corn — O:nenhste ↗	Medium	Full sun only	—	—	✓	Direct sow May 24+ (soil must be ≥65°F / 18°C)	10–15 seeds	70–100	↗ First Sister. Plant in a 4x4 ft BLOCK — not a row — for wind pollination (needs 10+ plants). Choose 70-day heirloom varieties for Toronto's short season.
Pole Beans — Ohsaheta ↗	Easy	Full sun only	✓ (trellis)	—	✓	Direct sow 2–3 weeks after corn is established (early Jun)	10–14 seeds	60–75	↗ Second Sister. Wraps up corn stalks. Fixes nitrogen in the soil, feeding the other sisters. Traditional runner beans most culturally significant.
Winter Squash — Onon'ohsera ↗	Easy	Full sun only	—	—	✓	Start indoors late Apr · direct sow May 24+	4–6 seeds	80–100	↗ Third Sister. Large leaves shade the ground, retain moisture & deter pests. Choose Hubbard, Delicata, or traditional pumpkin. Needs 4x4 ft minimum.
Sunflower ↗	Easy	Full sun only	✓ (dwarf)	—	✓	Direct sow May–Jun (do NOT transplant — dislikes root disturbance)	6–8 seeds	70–95	↗ 'Fourth Sister' — planted at garden edges to attract pollinators. Edible seeds important to Haudenosaunee diet. Choose dwarf varieties for containers.
COMMON VEGETABLES									
Tomatoes (cherry)	Medium	Full sun only	✓	—	✓	Start indoors Mar (6–8 wks before last frost) · outdoors May 24+	5–8 seeds	60–80	Needs cage or stake. 'Tumbling Tom' or 'Patio' for containers. Start early indoors.
Radishes	Easy	Full/Part	✓	—	✓	Direct sow Apr–May · again Aug–Sept	8–10 seeds	22–30	Fastest crop — ready in under a month. Perfect confidence-builder for beginners.
Peas (snap)	Easy	Full/Part	✓	—	✓	Direct sow Apr (frost tolerant — plant early!)	10–15 seeds	60–70	Needs trellis or fence. Cool-season only — done by July. Resow Aug for fall.
Zucchini	Easy	Full sun only	—	—	✓	Start indoors late Apr · direct sow May 24+	3–4 seeds	45–55	1 plant feeds a whole family. Take only 2–3 seeds. Needs 3x3 ft minimum.

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Cucumbers	Medium	Full sun only	✓ (bush)	—	✓	Start indoors late Apr · direct sow May 24+	5–8 seeds	50–65	Choose bush/patio varieties for containers. Train on trellis. Water consistently.
FLOWERS — Annual & Native Perennial									
Marigolds	Easy	Full sun only	✓	—	✓	Start indoors Apr · direct sow May	10–15 seeds	50–60	Companion plant — deters pests from tomatoes. Cut flowers to keep blooming all season.
Nasturtium	Easy	Full/Part	✓	—	✓	Direct sow mid-May (do NOT start indoors — fragile roots)	6–10 seeds	50–60	Edible flowers AND leaves! Trails from pots. Direct sow only. Deters aphids naturally.
Zinnia	Easy	Full sun only	✓	—	✓	Direct sow May–Jun	10–15 seeds	60–70	Long blooming season. Cut often for more flowers. Excellent pollinator plant.
Coneflower (Echinacea) ✦	Easy	Full/Part	✓	—	✓	Start indoors 6 wks before last frost · or direct sow May	10–15 seeds	Yr 2+	✦ Native N. American perennial. Traditional medicinal plant. Blooms for years. Leave seedheads for goldfinches in fall.
Black-eyed Susan ✦	Easy	Full/Part	✓	—	✓	Sow 6 wks before last frost · soil 70–75°F / 21–24°C	10–15 seeds	70–90	✦ Native to eastern N. America (Zones 3–9). Self-seeds readily. Golden blooms Jun–Sept. Loved by native pollinators.
Bee Balm / Wild Bergamot ✦	Easy	Full/Part	✓	—	✓	Start indoors 8–10 wks before last frost · or direct sow Apr	10–15 seeds	90–120	✦ 'Fourth Sister.' Medicinal herb used by Anishinaabe & Haudenosaunee peoples. Attracts hummingbirds & bees. Blooms midsummer.

Sources: Old Farmer's Almanac — almanac.com/plant/okra · almanac.com/plant/amaranth · almanac.com/plant/sunflowers · almanac.com/plant/coneflowers · almanac.com/plant/black-eyed-susans · almanac.com/plant/nasturtiums · almanac.com/vegetable-gardening-for-beginners | Haudenosaunee Confederacy — haudenosauneeconfederacy.com | National Ag Library — nal.usda.gov/ThreeSisters | The Canadian Encyclopedia — thecanadianencyclopedia.ca | Pinguag — HaudenosauneeKionhekwaGarden.com | Pinguag.com