

TIMING SEED STARTING for the SPRING GARDEN SALE, JUNE 1st.

(To determine when to start, count weeks back from the day of the sale)

10 to 12 weeks: Artichokes; it's easiest to sow many in a large flat or container and transplant one to a pot. **Onions, Leeks, and Shallots;** about 25-40 seeds to a 4" or 5" pot will work well; choose deeper pots if possible. **Herbs** such as Chives, leaf Fennel and parsley. **Perennial herbs** such as Marjoram, Savory, Sage and Thyme should be started ASAP. Also some **flowers** such as Rudbeckias and Snapdragons that are slow to germinate and grow.

8 to 10 weeks: Tomatoes, peppers, basil; these all can be started in groups in large containers and transplanted to individual pots after germination. You may need to replot them more than once if you start with small pots. Ideally, tomatoes should end up strong, stocky and about 12" to 16" tall in a one gallon pot. Basil may be one large, or several medium size plants in a pot depending on the size of the plants; a full pot makes a nice presentation. Peppers should end up one to a 4" or 5" pot.

LABELS for tomatoes: Variety name, hybrid or heirloom, DET or IND, type (cherry, slicer, salad, paste etc.), color if other than red, days to maturity.

5 to 6 weeks: Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Kale, Kohlrabi, bulb Fennel; 4 to 5 in a 4" or 5" pot. **Lettuces** of all kinds, **salad mixes;** 10 to 15 plants in a 4" or 5" pot; deep, extra large 6 packs are OK for lettuce, 3 to 4 plants per cell. **Beets and Chard** are good in 4" to 5" pots of at least 12 plants. In all of the above, you can plant more seeds than needed and thin if needed or plant a lot of seeds in a large container and transplant to smaller pots. Extra full pots of greens will sell first!

4 to 5 weeks: Squash, Pumpkins and Cucumbers: These all can be started many seeds to a large container and transplanted a few days after they come up to the pot they will go to the Sale in. Handle very carefully if you transplant. All should be 1 or 2 per 4" pot, 3 or 4 in a 5" or 6" pot. (Gallons are not desirable for these since they require a lot of soil, are heavy and hard to handle, don't transplant easily and we can't sell them for more money!!)

4 weeks: Dill and Cilantro; these herbs really don't like to be transplanted, but if you sow 6 or 8 seeds in a 4" pot we can caution customers to plant the whole pot and not try to divide the plants out.

3 to 4 weeks: Peas and Beans: 4 to 6 plants in a 4" or 5" pot. You can plant 5 to 7 seeds and hope for good germination, **OR** you can plant a lot of seeds in a flat, or large shallow container, and then transplant the small seedlings to the 4" or 5" pots. I don't recommend a larger pot for these since they are too tricky to transplant when they get large. You can pre-sprout the peas in the house between two wet paper towels, then plant them right to the pots. Be sure to keep the paper toweling

wet until peas show a root, when it's time to plant them. This method **DOES NOT WORK FOR BEANS.**

MORE POSSIBILITIES: ANNUAL FLOWERS, 4 or 5 weeks ahead; consult individual packet for days to germination and transplant: Sunflower, Cosmos, Marigold, Nasturtium and Zinnia. Sunflowers are VERY popular! Four to six plants in a 4" or 5" pot, or two to three sunflowers in a 6" pot are good. Most of these germinate quickly and have no special requirements.

CONTAINERS: All containers should be clean and sanitized to prevent disease. Six packs are discouraged since they don't allow enough room to develop good root systems and we can't keep them adequately watered during set up. If you plan to transplant seedlings before the Sale you can start the seeds in any sort of container that suits you; be sure they have drainage holes.

***Please remember that for the SALE we accept only nursery containers. NO DAIRY, DELI OR SALAD containers.**

GENERAL LABELING: When you start, be sure to label each seed container with the variety and the date sown; later on you can make nice labels once the plants go into permanent pots. Vegetable labels don't have the same requirements as ornamental plants. The information needed is: kind (i.e. cabbage, lettuce, bean), variety name, color or size if appropriate, days to maturity. If you have a seed packet or catalog description, a copy of that would be appreciated. On annual flowers provide information as to size, color, sun, shade and water needs.

GENERAL PRE-SALE TRANSPLANTING: Vegetable plants and annual flowers should be moved to larger pots once they start to outgrow the pots they are in. **All transplanting** should be done **NO LATER** than 2 weeks prior to the sale to allow enough time for plants to recover and start growing new roots. Water newly transplanted seedlings with a commercial transplant solution or liquid seaweed. All plants must be well rooted and not wilted.

REMEMBER. . . . WE WANT HEALTHY LOOKING PLANTS IN A 'RIGHT SIZE' POT. This means that the plant should fit the pot: **no tiny plants in giant pots or huge plants in tiny pots.** ☺

JUST ASK YOURSELF.....WOULD I BUY THAT PLANT??

Sally Reill, LCMG