



Oregon State University
Extension Service
Master Gardener™



Help your garden produce more food! Succession Planting

Succession planting is a way of planting food crops so that you have food to harvest over a longer period of time. There are different methods, but most focus on the times you start your plants and where you put them in your garden. Here are four succession planting methods arranged from less to more advanced.

1 Plant two different crops over a season or a season and a half, one after the other, in the same spot in your garden. Some crops have a short growing season. For example, peas, which are a cool weather crop, can be grown in the spring. Start your peas inside early, then transplant them outside for a late spring harvest. After you harvest a spring crop like peas, pull up the plants from the roots and use the spot you freed up to plant a warm season crop like eggplant or tomatoes.

Good Options for Multi-Crop Succession Plantings

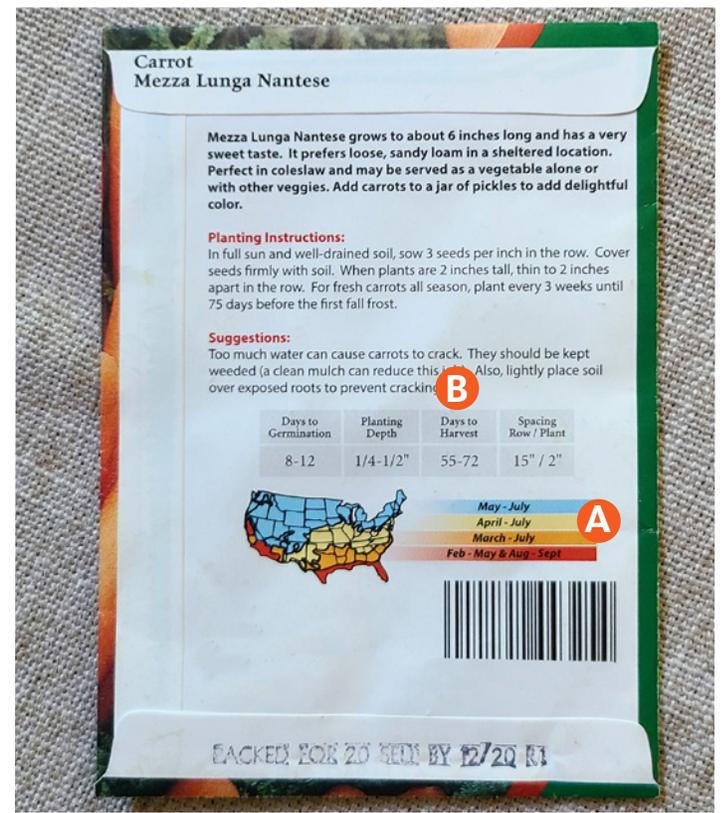
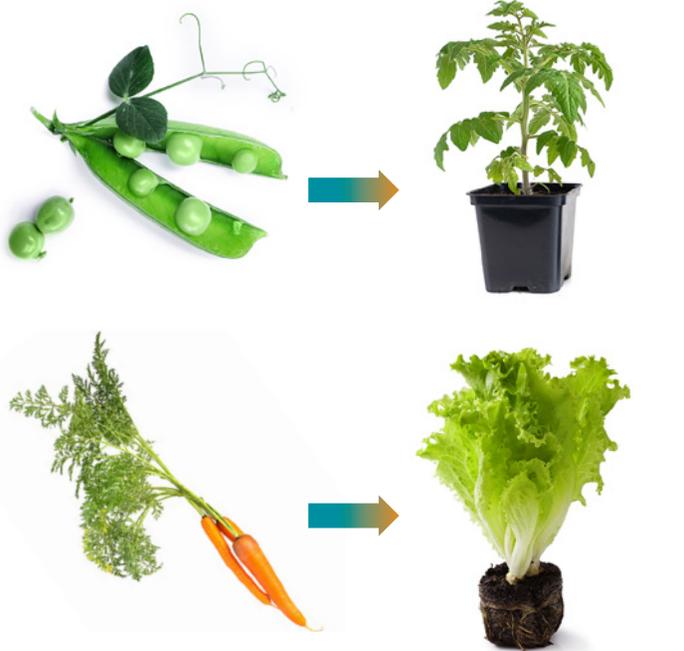
Cool Season Crop	Warm Season Crop
Arugula, beets, bok choy, broccoli, carrots, green onions, lettuce, peas, radishes, spinach, turnips	Basil, cilantro, corn, dill, eggplant, melons, summer squash, tomatoes, zucchini

2 Plant early-, mid-, and late-season varieties of the same crop to keep your harvest of that food going all season long. As you're choosing seed packets and plant starts, look on the back of the packets or plant info cards for the time in the season they are best planted **A**. Also, check the "days to maturity/harvest," **B** which is the number of days it will take from the time you plant the seed/start to the time the food is ready for harvesting. Look for a range in time between the types you select.

Good Options for Single-Crop Succession Plantings

Plants with types that have different maturity dates			
Broccoli	Brussels Sprouts	Cabbage	Carrots
Cauliflower	Celery	Collards	Corn
Eggplant	Green Beans	Kale	Melon
Peas	Summer squash	Tomatoes	

Pull up to free the spot once your plant is producing less food → **Plant in the open spot a vegetable plant about the size of your hand**



Succession Planting (continued)

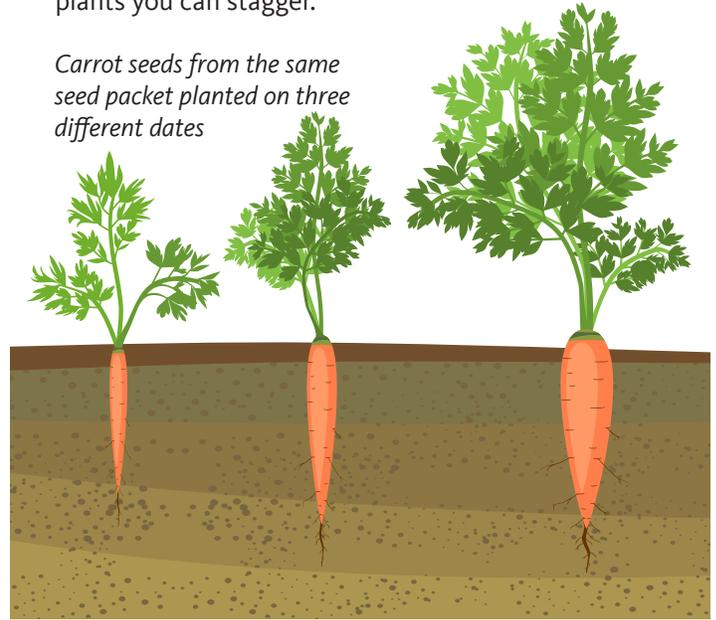
3 Plant two different crops close together (companion planting) to get a staggered harvest of the two and increase your garden space. This method works well when you've started seedlings indoors in early spring or use plant starts. Once the plants are strong enough and all danger of frost is gone, you can transplant them into your outside garden. After your transplant has had time to grow into their new space, about two weeks to one month, plant the seeds of a cool weather crop next to them. Place the seeds where the shade of your plants can help keep the soil cool. Make sure, though, that you don't plant the seeds too close to their companion plant, especially if it grows more slowly or if both crops will soon take up a lot of space. For example, kale plants can grow large and could overpower your new seedlings. If you plant seeds near a fully grown (mature) plant, then you will already know the shade it will cast.



Celery, lettuce and spinach growing close together

4 Stagger plantings of the same crop to be able to harvest it over a longer time period. For example, two weeks after planting your first batch of carrot seeds, plant another batch. Two weeks later, plant another batch. Continue throughout the season. Think about it this way: If you plant all your carrot seeds at one time, you will have only a few short weeks of a lot of carrots to harvest. If you space out your plantings, you'll have fresh carrots all season long. Radishes and lettuce are other plants you can stagger.

Carrot seeds from the same seed packet planted on three different dates



Extra tips for year-round success:

✿ **Plan ahead to make sure you have enough seed to get you from spring and into fall.** A teaspoon of seed can produce lots of food. One way to extend a seed packet and grow more types of plants is to swap some of the seeds in your packets with other gardeners. Or, you can save some of the seeds for your garden next year. Some seeds last several years; others, like onions, are better fresh for good germination (plant sprouting). If you have older seeds, you can try using them as microgreens (<http://foodhero.org/microgreens>).

✿ **Create a planting timeline.** In early spring, start your first batch of seeds indoors, like peas. Once you transplant those seedlings outdoors in mid-spring, begin seeding your second batch indoors to get ready to take the garden spot next, such as squash and cucumber in May or June. They should be ready to transplant outside as soon as your spring crops start to make less food at which point it is okay to pull the plant

out of the ground even if a few vegetables are still growing on it (overall you will grow more food this way). Once you transplant your second batch outside, seed your fall plants, such as kale and chard, indoors.

✿ **As you plant again and again in the same soil keep that soil healthy and full of nutrients.** Try adding compost to the soil between plantings or cover with leaves or leaf mulch over the winter.

✿ **Start seeds that like cooler temperatures during the summer by cooling the soil before planting them.** The easiest way to do this is to fully soak the planting area with water a few days before planting, and then cover it (try a board, light-colored tarp, or cardboard). Lift the cover to plant the seeds, water again, and then replace the board on top of the newly planted seeds. Check daily for germination and remove the cover when you see the first signs of green.



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Companion Planting

Plant two different crops close together (companion planting) to get a staggered harvest of the two, increase your garden space and help keep plants healthy.

Good Companion Planting Examples*

Plant	Companions	Why?
Green Beans (bush and pole)	Corn	Beans can grow in the shade corn provides, <i>especially in hot summers</i> . Also, their roots are at a different depth in the soil than the roots of corn; therefore, bean and corn plants do not compete for water and nutrients. A corn stalk can also serve as the “pole” for pole beans, saving space in the garden and leaving room for more plants.
The Brassica family (broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, collard greens, kale, kohlrabi, rutabagas, turnips)	Legumes (like edamame and fava)	Legumes can provide much-needed nitrogen in the soil over time. The legume plant needs to be left in the soil for its roots to decay so the nitrogen (in the root nodules) releases.
Carrots	Tomatoes	Carrots do not like heat. Planting them near tomato plants will provide them with shade.
Cucumbers	Corn	Try using corn stalks as natural trellises for smaller types of vining cucumbers (like pickling cucumbers, which will not be too heavy). This helps add growing space to your garden.
	Beans (bush and pole)	Legumes can provide much-needed nitrogen in the soil over time. The legume plant needs to be left in the soil for its roots to decay so the nitrogen (in the root nodules) releases.
Lettuce	Tomatoes	Lettuce grows best in cool weather. By mid-summer, it needs extra shade to stay cool or it will bolt (race to the end of its life cycle, turning to seed). Try planting it behind large, tall plants like corn or tomatoes to shield it from the sun.
Tomatoes	Carrots	Carrot roots help break up packed soil, “aerating” the soil around the tomato roots to allow more water and air to reach them.
	Basil	Basil and tomatoes taste great eaten together and they grow well together.

* Many home gardeners rely on other companion-planting pairs. One of the most common is to grow herbs and flowers with strong scents (mint, dill, basil, marigolds, and others) close to vegetables and flowers to ward off unwanted insects and other pests. We don't yet have enough research to support these pairings. If you would like to give some a try, report back to us with your findings (email: food.hero@oregonstate.edu)!

