

Chicago, IL Vegetable Planting Calendar

When to plant 26 vegetables in Chicago, for the 2027 season, based on 1991–2020 normals. The dates build on the 32°F frost odds at Chicago Northerly Island (4.1 mi ENE), shifted by CSU Extension timing rules. You'll find each rule and its source below.

About the sources: the spring rules are from Colorado State University Extension and the fall count-back from University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension. We apply them to NOAA frost dates for Chicago; Illinois extension advice may differ.

Frost anchors: typical last frost Apr 10 (50%), balanced Apr 17 (30%), safe Apr 25 (10%); typical first frost Nov 5. Station Chicago Northerly Island (USC00111550), confidence Medium. USDA zone 6a–6b (2023). Chicago frost dates & growing zone.

Spring planting dates

“Plant out” means transplanting for crops started indoors and sowing or planting directly in the garden for the others. Each column applies CSU Extension's timing rule to a different last-frost anchor: **aggressive** = typical date (Apr 10, 50% risk), **balanced** = Apr 17 (30%), **safe** = Apr 25 (10%). For hardy crops the cell shows the CSU “as early as” window.

Chicago spring planting (2027 season)

Crop	How	Start indoors	Plant out: aggressive (50%)	Balanced (30%)	Safe (10%)	Min. soil temp
Tomatoes Very tender (warm season)	transplant	Apr 4–18	May 23	May 23	May 23	50°F
Peppers Very tender (warm season)	transplant	Mar 6–20	Apr 24	May 1	May 9	60°F
Potatoes Semi-hardy (cool season)	plant (seed pieces)	–	Mar 27 – Apr 10	Apr 3–17	Apr 11–25	45°F
Onions (dry, from sets) Hardy (cool season)	plant sets	–	Mar 13–27	Mar 20 – Apr 3	Mar 28 – Apr 11	35°F
Peas Hardy (cool season)	direct sow	–	Mar 13–27	Mar 20 – Apr 3	Mar 28 – Apr 11	40°F
Lettuce (leaf) Hardy (cool season)	direct sow	–	Mar 13–27	Mar 20 – Apr 3	Mar 28 – Apr 11	35°F
Carrots Semi-hardy (cool season)	direct sow	–	Mar 27 – Apr 10	Apr 3–17	Apr 11–25	40°F
Beans (snap) Tender (warm season)	direct sow	–	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 25	55°F
Summer squash Tender (warm season)	direct sow	–	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 25	60°F

Crop	How	Start indoors	Plant out: aggressive (50%)	Balanced (30%)	Safe (10%)	Min. soil temp
Broccoli Hardy (cool season)	transplant	Jan 30 – Feb 13	Mar 13–27	Mar 20 – Apr 3	Mar 28 – Apr 11	40°F
Cabbage Hardy (cool season)	transplant	Jan 30 – Feb 13	Mar 13–27	Mar 20 – Apr 3	Mar 28 – Apr 11	40°F
Cauliflower Semi-hardy (cool season)	transplant	Feb 13–27	Mar 27 – Apr 10	Apr 3–17	Apr 11–25	40°F
Kohlrabi Hardy (cool season)	direct sow	–	Mar 13–27	Mar 20 – Apr 3	Mar 28 – Apr 11	40°F
Green onions Hardy (cool season)	direct sow	–	Mar 13–27	Mar 20 – Apr 3	Mar 28 – Apr 11	35°F
Radishes Hardy (cool season)	direct sow	–	Mar 13–27	Mar 20 – Apr 3	Mar 28 – Apr 11	40°F
Spinach Hardy (cool season)	direct sow	–	Mar 13–27	Mar 20 – Apr 3	Mar 28 – Apr 11	40°F
Turnips Hardy (cool season)	direct sow	–	Mar 13–27	Mar 20 – Apr 3	Mar 28 – Apr 11	40°F
Beets Semi-hardy (cool season)	direct sow	–	Mar 27 – Apr 10	Apr 3–17	Apr 11–25	40°F
Swiss chard Semi-hardy (cool season)	direct sow	–	Mar 27 – Apr 10	Apr 3–17	Apr 11–25	40°F

Crop	How	Start indoors	Plant out: aggressive (50%)	Balanced (30%)	Safe (10%)	Min. soil temp
Parsnips Semi-hardy (cool season)	direct sow	–	Mar 27 – Apr 10	Apr 3–17	Apr 11–25	35°F
Sweet corn Tender (warm season)	direct sow	–	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 25	50°F
Cucumbers Tender (warm season)	direct sow	–	Apr 10	Apr 17	Apr 25	60°F
Eggplant Very tender (warm season)	transplant	Feb 27 – Mar 20	Apr 24	May 1	May 9	60°F
Cantaloupe Very tender (warm season)	direct sow	–	Apr 24	May 1	May 9	60°F
Watermelon Very tender (warm season)	direct sow	–	Apr 24	May 1	May 9	60°F
Winter squash Very tender (warm season)	direct sow	–	Apr 24	May 1	May 9	60°F

Before sowing, check the soil too. CSU recommends taking its temperature at 4 inches (6 inches for beans). Since NOAA publishes no soil-temperature normals, we give CSU's minimum soil temperature for each crop rather than a date.

Fall planting dates

Latest dates for a fall harvest, using the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension count-back formula: days to harvest (CSU) + 14-day fall factor + 14-day frost-tender factor for frost-sensitive crops, counted back from the first-frost date. For transplanted crops (CSU days are from transplant) the result is the latest transplant date; seeds go in CSU's transplant-age weeks earlier. We add no harvest period, so these dates give you a first harvest by the first frost, not a long harvest.

Chicago fall planting

Crop	How	Days counted back	By (typical first frost Nov 5)	By (early first frost Oct 24)
Peas	sow	79	Aug 18	Aug 6
Lettuce (leaf)	sow	74	Aug 23	Aug 11
Carrots	sow	84	Aug 13	Aug 1
Beans (snap)	sow	88 (frost-tender)	Aug 9	Jul 28
Summer squash	sow	78 (frost-tender)	Aug 19	Aug 7
Broccoli	transplant (start seeds Jun 30 – Jul 14)	79	Aug 18	Aug 6
Cabbage	transplant (start seeds Jun 10–24)	99	Jul 29	Jul 17
Kohlrabi	sow	64	Sep 2	Aug 21
Green onions	sow	74	Aug 23	Aug 11
Radishes	sow	44	Sep 22	Sep 10
Spinach	sow	54	Sep 12	Aug 31
Turnips	sow	64	Sep 2	Aug 21
Beets	sow	74	Aug 23	Aug 11
Swiss chard	sow	74	Aug 23	Aug 11
Cucumbers	sow	83 (frost-tender)	Aug 14	Aug 2

Month-by-month: what to plant in Chicago

What to plant in Chicago in January

- Start broccoli seeds indoors (Jan 30 – Feb 13)
- Start cabbage seeds indoors (Jan 30 – Feb 13)

What to plant in Chicago in February

- Start cauliflower seeds indoors (Feb 13–27)
- Start eggplant seeds indoors (Feb 27 – Mar 20)
- Start broccoli seeds indoors (Jan 30 – Feb 13)
- Start cabbage seeds indoors (Jan 30 – Feb 13)

What to plant in Chicago in March

- Start pepper seeds indoors (Mar 6–20)
- Onions (dry, from sets): plant sets outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Peas: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Lettuce (leaf): direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Broccoli: transplant outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Cabbage: transplant outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Kohlrabi: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Green onions: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Radishes: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Spinach: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Turnips: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Potatoes: plant (seed pieces) outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)
- Carrots: direct sow outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)
- Cauliflower: transplant outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)
- Beets: direct sow outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)
- Swiss chard: direct sow outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)
- Parsnips: direct sow outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)
- Start eggplant seeds indoors (Feb 27 – Mar 20)

What to plant in Chicago in April

- Start tomato seeds indoors (Apr 4–18)
- Beans (snap): direct sow outdoors (Apr 10–25)
- Summer squash: direct sow outdoors (Apr 10–25)
- Sweet corn: direct sow outdoors (Apr 10–25)
- Cucumbers: direct sow outdoors (Apr 10–25)
- Peppers: transplant outdoors (Apr 24 – May 9)
- Eggplant: transplant outdoors (Apr 24 – May 9)
- Cantaloupe: direct sow outdoors (Apr 24 – May 9)
- Watermelon: direct sow outdoors (Apr 24 – May 9)
- Winter squash: direct sow outdoors (Apr 24 – May 9)
- Onions (dry, from sets): plant sets outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Peas: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)

- Lettuce (leaf): direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Broccoli: transplant outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Cabbage: transplant outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Kohlrabi: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Green onions: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Radishes: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Spinach: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Turnips: direct sow outdoors (Mar 13 – Apr 11)
- Potatoes: plant (seed pieces) outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)
- Carrots: direct sow outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)
- Cauliflower: transplant outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)
- Beets: direct sow outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)
- Swiss chard: direct sow outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)
- Parsnips: direct sow outdoors (Mar 27 – Apr 25)

What to plant in Chicago in May

- Tomatoes: transplant outdoors (May 23)
- Peppers: transplant outdoors (Apr 24 – May 9)
- Eggplant: transplant outdoors (Apr 24 – May 9)
- Cantaloupe: direct sow outdoors (Apr 24 – May 9)
- Watermelon: direct sow outdoors (Apr 24 – May 9)
- Winter squash: direct sow outdoors (Apr 24 – May 9)

What to plant in Chicago in June

- Start cabbage seeds indoors for a fall crop (Jun 10–24)
- Start broccoli seeds indoors for a fall crop (Jun 30 – Jul 14)

What to plant in Chicago in July

- Last day to set out cabbage transplants for a fall harvest (by Jul 29)
- Start broccoli seeds indoors for a fall crop (Jun 30 – Jul 14)

What to plant in Chicago in August

- Last day to sow beans (snap) for a fall harvest (by Aug 9)
- Last day to sow carrots for a fall harvest (by Aug 13)
- Last day to sow cucumbers for a fall harvest (by Aug 14)
- Last day to sow peas for a fall harvest (by Aug 18)
- Last day to set out broccoli transplants for a fall harvest (by Aug 18)
- Last day to sow summer squash for a fall harvest (by Aug 19)

- Last day to sow lettuce (leaf) for a fall harvest (by Aug 23)
- Last day to sow green onions for a fall harvest (by Aug 23)
- Last day to sow beets for a fall harvest (by Aug 23)
- Last day to sow swiss chard for a fall harvest (by Aug 23)

What to plant in Chicago in September

- Last day to sow kohlrabi for a fall harvest (by Sep 2)
- Last day to sow turnips for a fall harvest (by Sep 2)
- Last day to sow spinach for a fall harvest (by Sep 12)
- Last day to sow radishes for a fall harvest (by Sep 22)

Crop-by-crop notes

When to plant tomatoes in Chicago

Very tender crop. Set tomatoes out about May 23, whichever risk level you go by. That date comes from CSU Extension's night rule (nights above 52°F): the average nightly low at Chicago Northerly Island first rises above 52°F on May 23. CSU's other rule, at least 2 weeks after the average last frost, would allow about Apr 24 in Chicago. Sow seeds indoors Apr 4–18, 5–7 weeks before transplanting on May 23. Below 55°F at night, fruit set suffers (CSU). At Chicago Northerly Island, the normal low reaches 55°F on Jun 2. Set out on May 23, tomato plants would start producing around Jul 27, based on CSU's typical 65 days from transplant to harvest. That leaves 101 days before the typical first frost (Nov 5).

When to plant peppers in Chicago

Very tender crop. CSU Extension's rule is to set peppers out at least 2 weeks after the average last frost. That's about Apr 24 using the typical date, May 1 as a balanced choice, or May 9 if you go by the safer 10% date. Start seeds indoors Mar 6–20, 6–8 weeks before transplanting on May 1. Below 55°F at night, fruit set suffers (CSU). At Chicago Northerly Island, the normal low reaches 55°F on Jun 2. Using CSU's typical 70 days from transplant to harvest, pepper plants set out on May 1 would start producing around Jul 10. That's 118 days before the typical first frost (Nov 5).

When to plant potatoes in Chicago

Semi-hardy crop. CSU says potatoes can be planted as early as 0–2 weeks before the average last frost, in soil of at least 45°F. In Chicago, that's roughly Mar 27 – Apr 10 going by the typical date, or Apr 11–25 going by the safer date.

When to plant onions (dry, from sets) in Chicago

Hardy crop. CSU says onions (dry, from sets) can go in as early as 2–4 weeks before the average last frost: roughly Mar 13–27 in Chicago using the typical date, or Mar 28 – Apr 11 using the safer one. Wait until the soil can be worked and is at least 35°F.

When to plant peas in Chicago

Hardy crop. Per CSU, peas can be planted as early as 2–4 weeks before the average last frost, as long as the soil is workable and at least 40°F. For Chicago, that works out to roughly Mar 13–27 (typical date) or Mar 28 – Apr 11 (safer date). For a fall crop, sow by Aug 18, or by Aug 6 to be safe. That's 79 days back from the first-frost date.

When to plant lettuce (leaf) in Chicago

Hardy crop. Per CSU, lettuce (leaf) can be planted as early as 2–4 weeks before the average last frost, as long as the soil is workable and at least 35°F. For Chicago, that works out to roughly Mar 13–27 (typical date) or Mar 28 – Apr 11 (safer date). For a fall crop, sow by Aug 23, or by Aug 11 to be safe. That's 74 days back from the first-frost date.

When to plant carrots in Chicago

Semi-hardy crop. Per CSU, carrots can go in as early as 0–2 weeks before the average last frost: roughly Mar 27 – Apr 10 in Chicago (typical date) or Apr 11–25 (safer date). The soil should be at least 40°F. For fall, sow by Aug 13 (Aug 1 to be safe), which is 84 days before the first-frost date.

When to plant beans (snap) in Chicago

Tender crop. Sow beans (snap) around the average last frost, per CSU: about Apr 10 in Chicago. Waiting until Apr 25 cuts the chance of a later 32°F night to 1 in 10. Seeds need soil of at least 55°F. For fall, sow by Aug 9 (Jul 28 to be safe), which is 88 days before the first-frost date.

When to plant summer squash in Chicago

Tender crop. Sow summer squash around the average last frost, per CSU: about Apr 10 in Chicago. Waiting until Apr 25 cuts the chance of a later 32°F night to 1 in 10. Seeds need soil of at least 60°F. For fall, sow by Aug 19 (Aug 7 to be safe), which is 78 days before the first-frost date.

When to plant broccoli in Chicago

Hardy crop. CSU says broccoli can go in as early as 2–4 weeks before the average last frost, once the soil can be worked and is at least 40°F. In Chicago, that's roughly Mar 13–27 going by the typical date, or Mar 28 – Apr 11 going by the safer date. CSU's typical time from transplant to harvest for

broccoli plants is 65 days. Set out on Mar 20, they would start producing around May 24, 165 days before the typical first frost (Nov 5). For a fall crop, set broccoli transplants out by Aug 18. That's UNL Extension's count-back from the typical first frost (Nov 5), using CSU's 65 days from transplant to harvest. If you grow your own transplants, start seeds Jun 30 – Jul 14 (CSU: 5–7 weeks to transplant size).

When to plant cabbage in Chicago

Hardy crop. CSU says cabbage can go in as early as 2–4 weeks before the average last frost: roughly Mar 13–27 in Chicago using the typical date, or Mar 28 – Apr 11 using the safer one. Wait until the soil can be worked and is at least 40°F. Set out on Mar 20, cabbage plants would start producing around Jun 13, based on CSU's typical 85 days from transplant to harvest. That leaves 145 days before the typical first frost (Nov 5). For a fall harvest of cabbage, get transplants in the ground by Jul 29 (UNL Extension count-back from the typical first frost, Nov 5, with CSU's 85 days from transplant to harvest). To raise your own, sow seeds Jun 10–24, 5–7 weeks ahead (CSU).

When to plant cauliflower in Chicago

Semi-hardy crop. CSU says cauliflower can be planted as early as 0–2 weeks before the average last frost, in soil of at least 40°F. In Chicago, that's roughly Mar 27 – Apr 10 going by the typical date, or Apr 11–25 going by the safer date.

When to plant kohlrabi in Chicago

Hardy crop. CSU says kohlrabi can go in as early as 2–4 weeks before the average last frost: roughly Mar 13–27 in Chicago using the typical date, or Mar 28 – Apr 11 using the safer one. Wait until the soil can be worked and is at least 40°F. For a fall crop, sow by Sep 2, or by Aug 21 to be safe. That's 64 days back from the first-frost date.

When to plant green onions in Chicago

Hardy crop. Per CSU, green onions can be planted as early as 2–4 weeks before the average last frost, as long as the soil is workable and at least 35°F. For Chicago, that works out to roughly Mar 13–27 (typical date) or Mar 28 – Apr 11 (safer date). For fall, sow by Aug 23 (Aug 11 to be safe), which is 74 days before the first-frost date.

When to plant radishes in Chicago

Hardy crop. CSU says radishes can go in as early as 2–4 weeks before the average last frost: roughly Mar 13–27 in Chicago using the typical date, or Mar 28 – Apr 11 using the safer one. Wait until the soil can be worked and is at least 40°F. For fall, sow by Sep 22 (Sep 10 to be safe), which is 44 days before the first-frost date.

When to plant spinach in Chicago

Hardy crop. CSU says spinach can go in as early as 2–4 weeks before the average last frost: roughly Mar 13–27 in Chicago using the typical date, or Mar 28 – Apr 11 using the safer one. Wait until the soil can be worked and is at least 40°F. For fall, sow by Sep 12 (Aug 31 to be safe), which is 54 days before the first-frost date.

When to plant turnips in Chicago

Hardy crop. CSU says turnips can go in as early as 2–4 weeks before the average last frost, once the soil can be worked and is at least 40°F. In Chicago, that's roughly Mar 13–27 going by the typical date, or Mar 28 – Apr 11 going by the safer date. For fall, sow by Sep 2 (Aug 21 to be safe), which is 64 days before the first-frost date.

When to plant beets in Chicago

Semi-hardy crop. Per CSU, beets can go in as early as 0–2 weeks before the average last frost: roughly Mar 27 – Apr 10 in Chicago (typical date) or Apr 11–25 (safer date). The soil should be at least 40°F. For a fall crop, sow by Aug 23, or by Aug 11 to be safe. That's 74 days back from the first-frost date.

When to plant swiss chard in Chicago

Semi-hardy crop. CSU allows planting swiss chard as early as 0–2 weeks before the average last frost, in soil at 40°F or warmer. For Chicago, that's roughly Mar 27 – Apr 10 by the typical date or Apr 11–25 by the safer date. For fall, count back 74 days from the first-frost date. That means sowing by Aug 23, or by Aug 11 to be safe.

When to plant parsnips in Chicago

Semi-hardy crop. Per CSU, parsnips can go in as early as 0–2 weeks before the average last frost: roughly Mar 27 – Apr 10 in Chicago (typical date) or Apr 11–25 (safer date). The soil should be at least 35°F.

When to plant sweet corn in Chicago

Tender crop. CSU says to sow sweet corn around the average last frost, about Apr 10 in Chicago. If you want only a 1-in-10 chance of a later 32°F night, wait until Apr 25. Seeds need soil of at least 50°F.

When to plant cucumbers in Chicago

Tender crop. CSU's timing for cucumbers is around the average last frost, which is about Apr 10 in Chicago. For only a 1-in-10 chance of a later 32°F night, hold off until Apr 25. Seeds want soil at 60°F or warmer. For fall, count back 83 days from the first-frost date. That means sowing by Aug 14, or by Aug 2 to be safe.

When to plant eggplant in Chicago

Very tender crop. CSU Extension's rule is 2+ weeks after the average last frost, which puts eggplant outside around Apr 24 (typical date), May 1 (balanced) or May 9 (safer 10% date). Start seeds indoors Feb 27 – Mar 20, 6–9 weeks ahead of transplanting on May 1. Using CSU's typical 60 days from transplant to harvest, eggplant plants set out on May 1 would start producing around Jun 30. That's 128 days before the typical first frost (Nov 5).

When to plant cantaloupe in Chicago

Very tender crop. CSU Extension's rule is to plant cantaloupe at least 2 weeks after the average last frost. That's about Apr 24 using the typical date, May 1 as a balanced choice, or May 9 if you go by the safer 10% date. Seeds need soil of at least 60°F.

When to plant watermelon in Chicago

Very tender crop. CSU Extension's rule is to plant watermelon at least 2 weeks after the average last frost. That's about Apr 24 using the typical date, May 1 as a balanced choice, or May 9 if you go by the safer 10% date. Seeds need soil of at least 60°F.

When to plant winter squash in Chicago

Very tender crop. CSU Extension's rule is to plant winter squash at least 2 weeks after the average last frost. That's about Apr 24 using the typical date, May 1 as a balanced choice, or May 9 if you go by the safer 10% date. Seeds need soil of at least 60°F.

How these dates are calculated

Timing rules, their sources and where each source applies

Rule	Applies to	Source (scope)
Hardy (cool season): "As early as 2-4 weeks before the date of the average last spring frost."	Onions (dry, from sets), Peas, Lettuce (leaf), Broccoli, Cabbage, Kohlrabi, Green onions, Radishes, Spinach, Turnips	Colorado State University Extension, Vegetable Planting Guide (CMG GardenNotes #720) (written for Colorado; its frost-relative rules are applied to other states' NOAA frost dates and labelled as CSU (Colorado) rules)
Semi-hardy (cool season): "As early as 0-2 weeks before the date of the average last spring frost."	Potatoes, Carrots, Cauliflower, Beets, Swiss chard, Parsnips	Colorado State University Extension, Vegetable Planting Guide (CMG GardenNotes #720) (written for Colorado; its frost-relative rules are applied to other states' NOAA frost dates and labelled as CSU (Colorado) rules)
Tender (warm season): "From seed: around the date of the average last spring frost"	Beans (snap), Summer squash, Sweet corn, Cucumbers	Colorado State University Extension, Vegetable Planting Guide (CMG GardenNotes #720) (written for Colorado; its frost-relative rules are applied to other states' NOAA frost dates and labelled as CSU (Colorado) rules)
Very tender (warm season): "Typically 2+ weeks after the average last spring frost date."	Tomatoes, Peppers, Eggplant, Cantaloupe, Watermelon, Winter squash	Colorado State University Extension, Vegetable Planting Guide (CMG GardenNotes #720) (written for Colorado; its frost-relative rules are applied to other states' NOAA frost dates and labelled as CSU (Colorado) rules)
Start indoors = transplant age (weeks) before the balanced transplant date; days to harvest; minimum soil temperature	Crops with those values in CSU's table	CSU Extension, Vegetable Planting Guide (CMG GardenNotes #720) (written for Colorado; its frost-relative rules are applied to other states' NOAA frost dates and labelled as CSU (Colorado) rules)

Rule	Applies to	Source (scope)
Night-temperature dates: first day the NOAA 1991–2020 daily normal low (DLY-TMIN-NORMAL) is above the CSU transplant threshold or reaches the fruit-set threshold	Tomatoes (above 52°F at transplant, 55°F fruit set), peppers (55°F fruit set)	CSU Growing Tomatoes, CSU Peppers and Eggplants (written for Colorado; generic temperature thresholds applied nationwide with attribution)
Fall count-back: days to harvest + fall factor (14) + frost-tender factor (14)	Peas, Lettuce (leaf), Carrots, Beans (snap), Summer squash, Broccoli, Cabbage, Kohlrabi, Green onions, Radishes, Spinach, Turnips, Beets, Swiss chard, Cucumbers	UNL Extension, Fall Vegetable Gardening (G1343) (written for Nebraska; the count-back formula is applied nationwide with attribution)

CSU states its spring rules relative to “the average last spring frost.” We use the 50% date as that average and also show the 30% and 10% anchors. See the methodology for details and limitations.

FAQ

When should I start seeds indoors in Chicago?

Tomatoes: Apr 4–18. Peppers: Mar 6–20. Both windows count back from a balanced (30%-risk) transplant date using CSU's transplant ages.

When should I plant tomatoes outside in Chicago?

About May 23 at every risk level, because the night rule decides it. CSU wants nights above 52°F at transplant, and the average nightly low at Chicago Northerly Island first rises above 52°F on May 23. CSU's frost rule (2+ weeks after the average last frost) would allow about Apr 24 here.

What can I plant in Chicago in the fall?

Counting back from the typical first frost (Nov 5) with UNL Extension's method: peas by Aug 18; lettuce (leaf) by Aug 23; carrots by Aug 13; beans (snap) by Aug 9; summer squash by Aug 19; broccoli by Aug 18 (transplants); cabbage by Jul 29 (transplants); kohlrabi by Sep 2; green onions by Aug 23; radishes by Sep 22; spinach by Sep 12; turnips by Sep 2; beets by Aug 23; swiss chard by Aug 23; cucumbers by Aug 14.

Download

- Calendar file (.ics) with frost dates and planting windows for 2027
- Printable PDF of this calendar
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Frost odds: NOAA NCEI U.S. Climate Normals 1991–2020. Hardiness zones: PRISM Group, Oregon State University, <https://prism.oregonstate.edu>, accessed 2026-10-08. Not the official USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. How we calculate.

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