



WHAT TO PLANT IN JULY

It's July here in southern Arizona and we are finally entering our monsoon season WHICH SIMPLY PUT IS OUR RAINY SUMMER SEARSON.

Our first frosty date lands around October 15. That means I have THREE months to grow food before my first frost.

Since we are in the middle of summer at the hottest time of the year this is a perfect time to plant seeds directly in ground. Sowing seeds directly in ground is my favorite way to grow food. You don't have to worry about transplanting hardening off and all of the things that go with growing plants in modules and under grow lights and all of those things.

So what can you direct so in the ground before the last frost if you are in growing zones 8A or warmer? Here are a list of my favorite things to direct so and some transplants this late in the season:

1. Number one is Bush beans growing Bush beans from seed is absolutely the easiest thing to do. The seeds are nice and large so it's easy to plant a single seed give them lots of space and they germinate so quickly because of the heat. The key to growing Bush beans is you need to continuously pick the beans if you want a continuous harvest of green beans. If you're growing beans for them to be dry beans, then you simply want to wait for the pods to dry and harvest at the end of the season.
2. Cantaloupe and cucumbers I am putting these two types of plants that are actually in the same plant family together. You still have time to plant them from seed and get a nice harvest this late in the season. I have often found that squash bugs and cucumber beetles typically will not bother me later plantings of cucumbers and cantaloupes as we are deeper into the summer season.



3. Corn. There is an expression around here I don't know if you've heard of it but the expression goes like this quote you want your corn knee high by the 4th of July End Quote and while yes you do want to plant corn earlier in the season there is still time to plant sweet corn. You might be cutting it a little close to grow dent or popcorn this late in the season, but you can definitely grow some sweet corn there are many different varieties out there that grow very quickly and will produce a nice crop. The key to growing sweet corn is at minimum you want a 4 by 8 4 foot by 8-foot growing bed and you want them nice densely planted so that they can pollinate in one nice block. If you have more than more space continue to plant in sow your corn densely but make sure they are they are together in square formation rather than just a straight row of corn.

4. Okra. With the first frost date being later in the fall, you will still have time to plant and harvest before the first frost. Okra loves hot weather. The hot and humid temps in mid- summer makes your plants explode with growth. Your okra will not grow as tall as your spring planted okra, but you will still be able to harvest from it. The key to growing good okra, is to plant in full sun, and always keep the plants watered. Once established, it will start to produce fruit quickly. Keep harvesting okra daily to get an abundant harvest. Once you stop picking okra, it signals to plant that it has done its job, and it will start to die back.

5. Pumpkin and winter squashes need to be planted by a transplant at this time you can try to plant them by seed but you really are cutting it close. The reason is pumpkin and winter squashes usually have a hard skin to them and it takes them time to cure and they take longer to grow because of the density of the fruit that they are producing. Summer squash on the other hand does not take as long and you still have time to plant zucchini crookneck squash all of those by seed and you'll still be able to get a nice harvest again just like cantaloupe and cucumbers you will find that pest pressure seems to be a little bit less with those plants.



6. Watermelon. This also needs to be done by transplant at this time. Just like pumpkin and winter squashes watermelon has a harder skin and it does take longer for it to grow plus watermelon likes long hot humid summers. And as the days go on as we get closer to fall the days are getting shorter, so you want to get a jump on your watermelon season by doing your watermelon from transplant.

7. Potatoes. Potatoes are kind of tricky this time of year but for those of us that have the warmer climate you really need to pay attention to soil temperature. It takes potatoes 15 to 20 weeks to mature. Potatoes like the soil to be anywhere between 50 to 86°F. So, if you choose to plant potatoes at this point you need to mulch your potatoes and you need a loose mulch, but you need to do it heavily. I favor grass clippings for this because grass clippings are loose enough for the potatoes to poke through, but they are dense enough to keep the soil temperature down.

8. There are also several flowers that can be planted at this time flowers such as:

1. Sunflowers
2. Zenia
3. Cosmos
4. 4 o'clocks
5. Marigolds
6. Nasturtiums
7. Vinca
8. Angelonia
9. Salvia

.....and so much more



Keep in mind this is also the time that you want to start thinking about your fall garden. Your fall garden will include frost tolerant crops such as broccoli cabbage cauliflower and Brussels sprouts.

I have a bonus crop for you. There is nothing in the world that produces so much fruit then monsoon tomatoes. I have had so much success with tomatoes that have been transplanted and grown during the monsoon season. If you live in Arizona do yourself a favor and try to grow tomatoes during the monsoon season you will find that the cooler temperatures and the damp weather makes your tomatoes grow nice and plump.

Happy gardening.