

Laura Phillips  
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

### **Garden Talk: Transplants or Seeds?**

As you start planting your garden, you might be wondering – when do I put seeds directly into the garden and when should they be started inside? Starting seeds indoors can prolong your growing season. If warm season crops like tomatoes and peppers cannot germinate in colder weather, they will not start sprouting and growing until May. But if you start them inside where it is warm, they can get a head start on growing, hopefully lending to more produce.

While it might seem like a good idea to start everything inside, some plants simply do not thrive when transplanted. These plants tend to have delicate root systems that cannot survive disturbances. Beans, peas, and corn are common victims of this transplant shock. Another issue is that root vegetables can lose their fibrous taproot during transplanting, and while the plant may survive, the main harvest is lost.

Other plants germinate so quickly that there is not always a need to start them inside. For example, lettuce can germinate in the warm temperatures of late spring and early summer within a few days. Conversely, if you are planting in the early spring, you may want to use transplants, as lettuce can take up to two weeks to germinate in colder temperatures.

If you buy a packet of seeds, look on the back for growing instructions. It should tell you if the seeds need to be directly sown into the soil or if you can start them inside. Many plants can be grown either way, and it is up to you how you want to plant them. As we enter spring, take a moment to research and determine which of your plants can be started inside, and which will do better directly sown into the soil to maximize your garden's productivity this year. Your garden will thank you for it!

#### Plants to Directly Sow Outside

- Beans
- Beets
- Carrots
- Parsnips
- Peas
- Radish
- Rutabagas
- Sweet corn
- Turnips

#### Plants that do Best Started Indoors

- Brussels sprouts
- Celery
- Eggplant
- Leeks
- Melons
- Pepper
- Tomatillo
- Tomato

Plants that can be either sown directly or started indoors

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- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Collard
- Cucumber
- Endive/Escarole
- Kale
- Lettuce
- Pumpkin
- Spinach
- Squash
- Swiss chard