

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

Growing and Harvesting in California

California has a wonderful climate for growing vegetables, with a whopping 270 days between the last and first frost dates in the season. Some areas of California, like San Diego and Sacramento, have no frost dates and vegetables can be in the ground year-round. Since California stretches the height of the United States, its USDA Hardiness Zones range from 5 to 9. This means that while some vegetables can be planted at a certain time in southern California, that time changes if planting that vegetable in northern California.

What to plant and when:

Since weather changes depending on the gardener's location in California, here is a simplified guide on what to plant and when based off what region of California the garden is prepared in.

Northern California and the north coast:

- **January/February-April:** Plant asparagus before March; turnips in January; beets; Brussels sprouts; cabbage; carrots; chard; kale; leeks; lettuce; peas and other cool season vegetables
- **March-June:** Plant beans closer to June, cantaloupes and melons in May; celery; corn; cucumbers; eggplant; endive; green onions; peppers, squash, tomatoes, okra and sweet potatoes in May and cauliflower in June
- **July-September:** Mustard greens; kohlrabi; chard; carrots in July; cabbage and broccoli
- **October-December:** Garlic and artichokes



California Planting Calendar on ufseeds.com

- **December-March:** Parsley and rhubarb

South coast:

- **January/February-April:** Plant white potatoes and turnips in February; bulb onions in February or March; chard; chives; leeks; carrots from January through September and asparagus in January
- **March-June:** Plant cantaloupe and other melons in May; Brussels sprouts in June; snap beans from March until August; lima beans in May or June; broccoli in June; sweet corn; celery until August; cucumbers and eggplant
- **July-September:** Cauliflower; kale in August
- **October-December:** Garlic
- **December-March:** Peas; rhubarb; parsley and endive

Interior valleys:

- **January/February-April:** Turnips in February; peas and asparagus



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- **March-June:** Pumpkin; summer squash; winter squash; sweet potatoes; peppers in May; okra in May; snap beans in May; lima beans in June; tomatoes
- **July-September:** Rutabaga and turnips in August; artichoke in July
- **October-December:** Spinach; summer squash and peas
- **December-March:** Parsley; bulb onions and broccoli

Desert valleys:

- **January/February-April:** Eggplant; cucumbers; sweet corn; cantaloupes; beans; asparagus
- **March-June:** Okra and peppers in March; pumpkins
- **July-August:** Cantaloupe also can be planted in July
- **September-November:** Garlic; lettuce; kale; artichoke in September
- **October-November:** Kohlrabi; cabbage; beets through January; rutabaga and green onions
- **December-March:** Watermelon later in December or in January; tomatoes

California's soil and how it affects agriculture:

In some places of California there is terrible soil, such as it consists mostly of sand or is very hard. In these areas, raised beds are an excellent choice to grow your vegetables so the poor soil doesn't impede growth. Most of California's soil isn't nutrient dense for vegetables. To improve it, amend it with compost or other materials to fix drainage issues, such as sand or peat moss.

The main different soil types in California include sandy soils, loamy soils and clay



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soils. Sandy soils are often found around mountain bases, along rivers or streams, and in some coastal areas. Sandy soil is not ideal to grow vegetables or crops in because it doesn't hold water well and contains little organic matter. Sandy soils can be amended with compost to make them more favorable to grow vegetables in. Loamy soils are found in valleys and flatter areas. Loam is a mix between sand and clay, and is usually fertile and holds moisture well. Sometimes, loam soil may need to be amended but it is a healthier soil to grow vegetables in than sand. Clay soils are popular in urban areas, and they have a low mineral content. Clay soils do not drain well and create lots of run-off. It is difficult to work with when dry, and vegetable roots may have a hard time spreading through the soil. If the gardener resides in an area with clay soil, a raised bed can better drainage issues and be easier to work with.

Average rainfall in different sections of California:

Depending on location, some gardens in



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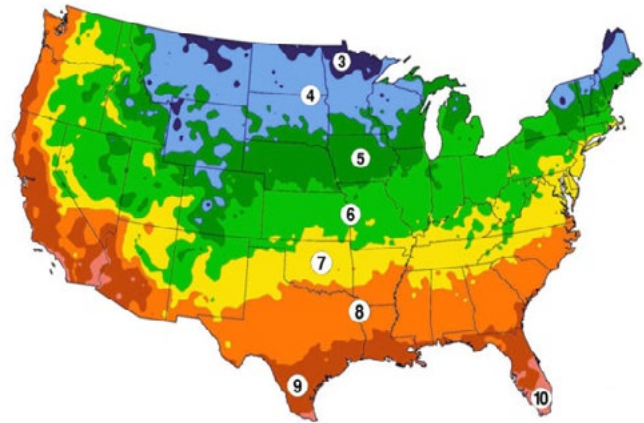
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California receive plenty of precipitation from rainfall and others don't receive as much. Less precipitation will occur in Southern California, which on average receives between 2.9 inches per year to 21.2 inches per year depending on if the garden is in a desert area or not. In Northern California, average inches of precipitation per year varies from 11.2 inches per year to 34.6 inches per year.

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[USDA Hardiness Gardening Zone Finder on ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)



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