



# SCHOOL GARDEN MENTORSHIP PROGRAM



Farm to School BC is a program of the

## Crop Planning Worksheet

to accompany the March 7, 2023 workshop

Farm to School BC has developed a series of crop planning resources specifically for school gardens that shifts traditional planting times to align with the school year, focusing on a spring and fall harvest while minimizing work in July and August. [Check out our crop planning tools here.](#)

### Key Terms

**DS: Direct Sow** - plant seeds directly in the soil in their final growing location

**IS: Indoor Sow** - plant seeds inside small growing pots, likely under grow lights or in the window; grow to size when plants can be transplanted

**T: Transplant** - after growing seeds inside, transplant seedlings into the garden, or their final growing location

**DM: Days to Maturity** - “The “days to maturity” number describes the average number of days from planting until it’s time to harvest. For seeds sown directly in the ground, that means from seeding to maturity. For those started inside, the days start from the time of transplanting outside.” - Oregon State University

**Harvest** means when the first crops are ready, though keep in mind that this could be a range depending on the crop; for example tomatoes can be harvested for many weeks, while carrots only a few times depending on carrot size.

For more gardening terms, head to [West Coast Seeds Gardening Glossary](#) page.


### Seed Starting vs Transplants

There are two ways to plant the crops, either by planting the seeds directly in the ground (Direct Sow, DS) or growing them inside (Indoor Sow, IS) and transplanting them outside (Transplanting, T). Some crops cannot be transplanted as they have sensitive root systems, but transplants are easier to plant with students as you know how many plants you have, and how far to space them. Also most plants can be direct sown later, though starting them indoors will get you an earlier harvest.

Several crops are much easier to start from seedlings purchased from your local supplier, including most herbs (basil is easier to start from seed), leeks, and onions.



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Most crops it is more preferable to indoor sow then transplant, like cabbage, kale, lettuce, tomatoes, most crops that the fruit is harvested from (root crops do not transplant as well).

## Season Extension

To have an earlier crop in the Spring or later in the Fall, season extension methods can be used like row covers, growing tunnels, or greenhouses. This guide does not include a planting schedule with these in mind at this time; refer to [West Coast Seeds' regional planting chart](#) for your region for how these methods can alter your planting dates.

## Fall Crops

Many of these fall harvest crops depend on the capacity to maintain the garden in the summer. If they are planted at the end of June, many will be ready in September. If a later harvest is desired, plant seeds a few weeks later. If there is little/no summer maintenance, plant the spring harvest crops, and plant them at the beginning of September.

## Herbs

Herbs can be tricky to grow from seed; beginning gardeners may want to purchase transplants from their local garden center. For planting seedlings, follow the transplanting date.

[West Coast Seeds Crop Planning Tool](#)

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## Building and Installing Garden Beds


see the pdf of the presentation for more tips

### Raised beds:

You can build your raised bed boxes any size you like but keep the width of the box being no wider than 36 inches for ease of access to working the garden by students - this applies to any garden bed that you are wanting students to engage with regularly.



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In terms of length if your box is more than 8 ft in length you should consider posts in the corners and a cross beam to prevent bowing or flexing of your wood. Beds that are 8 ft or less will not require either for stability.

## Building beds with wood:

- Get a volunteer who has the tools and expertise to build it!
- Never used treated wood
- Cedar is longest lasting wood (12+ years, but expensive) - other woods will last typically 7-10 years.
- Stagger when new beds are built, so they are not replaced at the same time
- Try to get a true 2 inch wood thickness
- Height of the bed should serve a purpose
- Use long 4 inch nails or screws when attaching