Planting with the Moon - Concept

This document is meant to share a set of examples and experiences of how to plan your garden planting schedule. The first concept is *Planting with the Moon*. Just as the Moon affects the tide for bodies of water, it also affects growing patterns in the following manner according to the light/gravity combination:



Planting with the Moon - Application

The practical implications of the Moon's effect upon the planting schedule is exemplified in the chart below. Some highlights include: When in doubt it is best to sow any plant in the 1st quarter (leaving the New Moon), avoid planting in the 4th quarter (going into a New Moon) if possible, work tasks can be optimized by cooperating with the cycles of the moon every month.



Identifying Frost Dates by Region/County

Seed planting is usually specified by weeks before or after the last frost date in the Spring months (March-May for most of the Northern Hemisphere). Some seed start dates are specified by waiting until an average soil temperature is reached (above 60 deg F for example). Seed planting for a Fall crop is calculated using the growing days to maturity/harvest and then working backwards from the last frost date. A chart of frost dates for a single county in central Ohio is shown below:

<u>This chart is county specific</u> <u>based on historical data from</u> <u>the National Climatic Data</u> <u>Center and was published by</u> <u>DavesGarden.com:</u> <u>https://davesgarden.com/gui</u> <u>des/freeze-frost-</u> <u>dates/index.php?q=43235&su</u> bmit=Go

Notice that even with data and mathematical probability there is still human subjectivity and experience involved in choosing what will work best for the gardener.

Marion Wtr Wks	s, OH (Ma	rion cou	nty):						
Temperature	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%
Spring 32°	May 11	May 7	May 4	May 1	Apr 29	Apr 26	Apr 23	Apr 20	Apr 16
Spring 28°	Apr 27	Apr 23	Apr 20	Apr 18	Apr 16	Apr 13	Apr 11	Apr 8	Apr 5
Spring 24°	Apr 19	Apr 15	Apr 11	Apr 8	Apr 5	Apr 3	Mar 31	Mar 27	Mar 23
Fall 32°	Sep 29	Oct 4	Oct 7	Oct 9	Oct 12	Oct 14	Oct 17	Oct 20	Oct 24
Fall 28°	Oct 7	Oct 13	Oct 17	Oct 21	Oct 24	Oct 27	Oct 31	Nov 3	Nov 9
Fall 24°	Oct 16	Oct 23	Oct 28	Oct 31	Nov 4	Nov 7	Nov 12	Nov 16	Nov 23

* This station data is available courtesy the National Climatic Data Center.

For each weather station, you will see a temperature along with tables of data organized into percentage columns. The percentage column tells you the probability that you will experience that row's temperature on or near that date. Here are two examples to help you determine your probable last frost and first freeze dates.

Example 1 (Last Frost). In the Spring 32° row, if you have "Apr 15" under the 50% column, that means you have a 50% chance of seeing frost on or before April 15th.

Example 2 (First Freeze). In the Fall 24° row, if you have "Dec 1" under the 90% column, that means you have a 90% chance of seeing 24 degrees on or after December 1st.

Empty cells indicate you have a less than 10% chance of ever seeing that temperature.

This chart is helpful in assessing risk. If I want to take very little risk, then I will use the 10% column from the 32° row as my last frost date. If I wanted to be more conservative, then I would just add days or weeks from May 11 in this case (+2 weeks for example) as my last frost date.

When starting my crops for Fall harvest; a safe bet is to use the 10% column from the 32° row for my first frost date. To be more conservative; subtract days from Sept. 29 for this county which would move your last frost date earlier in the year.

Identifying Start Dates by Plant Type

Taking into account what we know about our frost probability, we come up with the following example: Yellow Crookneck Zucchini takes 55-60 days to fully grow. Lets call it two months for easy math. The very first sign of frost for Marion, OH is September 29 (or the end of Sept.). So for a Fall harvest, we would start our zucchini outside two months before the end of September which works out to be near the end of July.

OVERVIEW	REVIEWS		
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Organic Yellow	Crookneck Squ	ash (Cucurbita pepo)	
A favorite summ heirloom is best • 15 Seeds Min • Germination	ner squash loved : piked early whe imum 8-12 days	for its crisp texture, buttery n fruits are just over 4" long	y-sweet flavor, compact size, and big yields. This delicious and yellow skin is tender.
 Maturity: 55 Direct sow 1 Space plants 	deep in full sun	after danger of frost has pas	ssed.
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	First Frost9 10% chance officit	30	
Annuary Putricity 		May	Jana Jaky			

https://www.anniesheirloomseeds.com/organic-yellowcrookneck-squash-cucurbita-pepo/

Info from Annie'sHeirloomSeeds.com:

Identifying Start Dates by Region, Plant, and the Moon

From the previous slide I have identified the end of July (28-30) as pretty safe dates to start my zucchini. Furthermore, these dates are part of the 1st quarter (Q1) which is advantageous for starting any plant. If I wanted to plant in the 2nd quarter (Q2) of the moon cycle to optimize for squash, then I could move my start date. A July 6-12 start date would be in Q2 but puts my harvest in risk of overheating in early-mid August. An August 5-10 start date is also in Q2 of the Moon phase but puts my harvest in danger of being exposed to frost which could kill my squash. So, for me I will choose July 28-30 in Q1 even though there are several start options that would likely yield a good harvest for many people.



Putting the Plan Into Action

In summary, main considerations for choosing start dates include:

- average last and first frost dates for my local region
- □ the plant requirements

Moon cycles

my level of risk I want to assume

As I plan my calendar, I organized the seeds by month into a Ziplock bag for easy storage. I also wrote the months on the packet to help me later. In the case of my zucchini, I will move the seed packet to the July bag after May planting is completed. By starting my zucchini in May and July, I will get an early and late harvest.

There are a lot of gardening systems, methodologies and ways to organize, but I hope this presentation helps you find your system.

I have scanned a copy of my growing calendar if anyone wants to copy parts of it. Lastly, I did not cover transplanting or greenhouse usage in this presentation which may be useful for you.

