

## Garden with Lisa Newsletter February 2023

Hello everyone and Happy February, it is almost spring . . . or is it? We can have some beautiful, fake-out days in February when one can be convinced that it will be warm and sunny henceforth. Psych! Two days later we have freezing temperatures and a dusting of snow.



Hold back gardeners! Refine your plan, order seeds, get your tools out and clean everything up. Reflect on the hits and misses from last season and make your plan. Revel in these late winter moments. Get ready. Late February, sow some cool season staples indoors, under lights . . . and begin again.

### 2023 Speaking and Educational Events

I am currently booking speaking events for 2023. I would be delighted to speak to your group either in person or virtually! Contact me at [gardenwithlisa@gmail.com](mailto:gardenwithlisa@gmail.com).

I hope to see you at one of these events!

<b>Date</b>	<b>topic</b>	<b>location</b>	<b>time</b>
February 8	Mason Bees are Cool	Shoreline Library	3pm
February 12	Edible Perennials for PNW	Molbaks Garden & Home	10am
February 23	Worms at Work	Richmond Beach Library	3pm
March 4	Raised Bed and Containers	Master Gardeners Pierce Co	9am
March 4	Growing Veg for the whole Family	MG Pierce Co	10:30am
March 8	Worms at Work	Lake Forest Park Library	3pm
March 14	Indoor growing	Cascade Water Alliance	7pm zoom
March 22	Worms at Work	Shoreline Library	3pm
March 23	Munch Buzz Bloom	Des Moines Library	10:30am
April 3	Munch Buzz Bloom	Woodmont Library	10:30am
April 8	Growing Veg when Water Is Scarce	Molbaks Garden & Home	10am
April 28	Incredible Insects	Crystal Springs Coop Preschool	(private show)

### February in the Garden

#### Outside

- Clean tools and repair hoses. Erect hoop houses, build cold frames.
- Weed paths and beds. A couple thorough weeding in February and March helps reduce the need to weed later in the spring and summer.
- Mulch paths and perennial beds.
- Dig new garden beds – check soil moisture. Cover soil with plastic or thick leaves and burlap to dry it out.
- Build Compost bins – try making a worm bin this year.
- Divide perennials and plant new trees, vines and shrubs.
- Put up Mason Bee Nests through mid-March

## Inside

- Set up your light table – or build one this year.
- Assemble your pots, trays, plant tags, soil and heat mats.
- Go through your seed collection. How do you tell if seeds are still good?
- Conduct germination tests to find out if seeds are viable.
- Sow in pots to transplant later: lettuce, cilantro, arugula, mustard, pak choi and kale.

Right on time. Sign up for my monthly Edible Garden Companion to learn when to plant your garden. <https://www.gardenwithlisa.com/store/c11/ediblegardencompanion>

## **When Can I Start Planting?**

This time of year, many people ask me when they can start their gardens. They have heard you should plant peas on President's day, can they do it later? Timing your garden planting is key if you want things to thrive. Rather than dates on a calendar, there are four other things to check to see if it is time to start planting.

**Last Frost Date.** For the Seattle area, the Last Frost Date is April 10. This is the average date that we experience a frost in the spring. Our LFD can vary from year to year but it is a great marker for when it is safe to put out your plant starts or sow seeds. If the seed packet says, "sow seeds indoors 6-8 weeks before last frost date" you can work backward on the calendar from April 10 or your area's LFD.



**Air temperature.** Spring days can be warm and summertime sunny. It is still cold at night. Keep an eye on nighttime low temperatures to determine when to plant. Cool season crops want it 40° F or warmer to start growing. Warm season crops need nighttime temperatures that are 50° F or warmer to thrive.

**Soil temperature.** Each spring the daytime temperatures and longer daylight hours warm up the soil gradually. Some areas of your garden will warm up faster than others so checking your soil temperature is key to knowing when you can plant different crops. Using a soil probe or instant read thermometer, you can find out the soil temperature in your garden. If you don't have a thermometer, you can get a reliable estimate by averaging the day's high and low temperatures.  
Example: low 38° + high 45° = 83 //  $83 \div 2 = 41.5^\circ$

**Soil moisture.** If you dig in your soil when it is too wet, it breaks apart into clods that dry into hard clods – effectively wrecking your soil texture. Make sure your soil moisture

is just right before you dig. Your soil moisture should be moist but not soggy. Grab a handful of soil and squeeze it gently into a ball. Toss the ball about 10 inches in the air and let it come down and hit your hand. If the ball falls apart easily, you can dig. If it stays together, then the soil too wet. Cover the soil with a sheet of cardboard to help it dry out. If your soil can't form a ball, then it is too dry – consider premoistening before planting.

## Right plant, right time . . . Timing is about Temperature

Last Frost Date      April 10-20

Cool Season Crop requirements

Air temp      40°-60°F

Soil temp to start growing 45°-50°F

Warm Season Crop requirements

Air temp      60°F or warmer

Soil temp to start growing 55°-60°F



Predict Soil Temperature

Average the day's high and low temperatures  $38 + 45 = 83 // 83 \div 2 = 41.5$

## Year at a Glance Planting Calendar

January - onions, leeks, scallions

February - greens, peas, onions, leeks, scallions

March - tomatoes, peppers, greens, peas, leeks, scallions

April - squash, cucumbers, pumpkins, tomatoes, peppers, greens, flowers, carrots, beets

May - beans, transplant everything, greens, flowers, carrots, beets

June - basil, beans, cucumbers, summer squash, carrots, beets, select greens

July - peas, select greens, bush beans, carrots, beets

August - snow peas, greens, carrots, beets

September - spinach, cilantro, lettuce, kale

October - garlic, cover crops

November - garlic, cover crops

December - alliums



Want to learn more about edible landscape design? This class will help you find the right place for your vegetables, flowers and herbs so you can get the most food from your yard. <https://www.gardenwithlisa.com/store/p16/designingediblelandscape.html>

## Family Garden Fun – Peas if You Please!

Last month we started a sprout farm, this month we are going to take it a step further and grow baby plants. Let's grow some Pea Shoots! It is fun and easy to grow and cook with these sweet, crunchy stems and tendrils. You can use any type of pea seed – snow, snap or shelling. Peas grow quickly so you may have a crop ready to eat in 4-5 weeks.

You will need:

Potting soil – enough to fill your pots or tubs

4" inch plant pots or reused plastic tubs with drainage holes

Small dish or drip pan

Pea seeds – 10-12 per pot

Masking tape or label for pot

Water



**Check soil moisture** Your seeds need moist soil to soften and sprout. Make sure your soil is just right. Moist soil accepts and absorbs water. Dry soil repels water. If your soil won't form a ball when you squeeze it, it is too dry.

It is easy to fix dry soil. Just pour a little water in the soil -- don't over-do it, you can always add more water but you can't take it away. Now mix the soil until the water is distributed throughout the soil. Test again, you want the soil to form a ball that easily falls apart. Add more water if needed.

**Plant your peas** Write the name of your seeds and the date on the masking tape or label and affix to pot or tub. Now fill your pot to the top with soil and level off. Now you are ready to plant the seeds. All seeds are planted to the same depth according to this formula: all seeds are planted to a depth of 2-3 times the thickness of the seed. Pea seeds are large so they are planted in a hole about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" inch deep. Just one seed per hole.

Plant all of your seeds – they will be crowded but that is fine. Cover the seeds with soil and give the soil gentle pat. Carefully water the pot making sure that the whole surface of the soil gets wet. Give enough water so that just a little water starts to come out of the drainage holes on the bottom.

**Grow baby plants** Put your pot on a small dish or drip pan and place in a sunny, warm window. Keep soil moist but not soggy. Check soil moisture and add water every 2 or 3 days as needed. Pots should not sit in standing water, don't over water! Soil should not dry out completely, don't under water!

### Eat Your Peas, Please

When pea shoots are 4"-6" inches tall, cut the stems and add to your stir fry. You can remove the old roots, add a little more potting soil and plant another crop!

**Pea Shoot Stir Fry**

Simply stir fry 10-20 pea shoots in hot oil with some minced ginger, garlic and green onion. Season with soy sauce to taste. Yum!

**Peas in the Garden**

Plant peas in the garden or a large container in early March and let them grow, flower and make pea pods ready to harvest in late June. Most Peas will need a trellis to climb up, Sugar Ann is a dwarf variety of Sugar Snap Pea that grows about 3 feet tall and could grow around a tomato cage or small teepee of sticks and string.

Want more family fun and kid's garden crafts? Sign up for the Young Gardeners' League and get a year of great hands-on gardening fun!

<https://www.gardenwithlisa.com/store/c3/younggardenersleague>



## Learn with Me!

If you have enjoyed this newsletter and want to learn more about growing your own edible garden, check out Garden with Lisa online classes

<https://www.gardenwithlisa.com/learnwithlisa.html>

## Handy Resources – Seed Houses and More!

The Garden Hotline (206) 633-0224 <http://gardenhotline.org/question/>

### **Books**

*Maritime Northwest Garden Guide, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* by Lisa Taylor, 2014.

*Your Farm in the City, An Urban Dwellers Guide to Growing Food and Raising Animals* by Lisa Taylor, 2011.

*Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades* by Steve Solomon, 2007.

*Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest* by Russell Link, 2004.

*Winter Gardening in the Maritime Northwest* by Binda Colebrook, 2013.

*Cool Season Gardener* by Bill Thorness, 2013.

### **Seed Houses That Offer Heirloom Varieties**

**Adaptive Seeds** [www.adaptiveseeds.com](http://www.adaptiveseeds.com)

**Deep Harvest Seeds** [www.deepharvestfarm.com](http://www.deepharvestfarm.com)

**Fedco Seeds** [www.fedcoseeds.com](http://www.fedcoseeds.com)

**Johnny's Selected Seeds** [www.johnnyseeds.com](http://www.johnnyseeds.com)

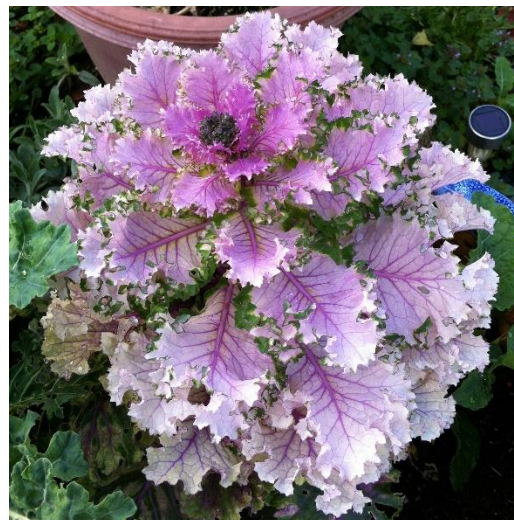
**Kitazawa Seed Co.** [www.kitazawaseed.com](http://www.kitazawaseed.com)

**Peace Seeds** [www.peaceseedslive.blogspot.com](http://www.peaceseedslive.blogspot.com)

**Seed Savers Exchange** [www.seedsavers.org](http://www.seedsavers.org)

**Territorial Seed Co.** [www.territoralseed.com](http://www.territoralseed.com)

**Uprising Seeds** [www.uprisingorganics.com](http://www.uprisingorganics.com)



### **Supplies**

A. M. Leonard, Horticulture Tool Supply Co., Piqua, OH, [www.amleo.com](http://www.amleo.com)

Grower's Supply Co., Iowa & Connecticut (800) 457-8887, [www.growerssupply.com](http://www.growerssupply.com)

Charlie's Greenhouse and Garden, Mt Vernon, WA,

(800) 322-4707, [www.charleysgh.com](http://www.charleysgh.com)

Johnny's Selected Seeds [www.johnnyseeds.com](http://www.johnnyseeds.com)

Lee Valley Tools, (800) 871-8158, [www.leevalley.com](http://www.leevalley.com)

OBC Northwest Inc., Greenhouse and Garden Supplies, Canby OR,

(800) 477-4744 [www.obcnw.com](http://www.obcnw.com)

Peaceful Valley Farm Supply, Grass Valley, CA, (888) 784-1722, [www.GrowOrganic.com](http://www.GrowOrganic.com)

Walt's Organic Fertilizer, Seattle, WA, (206) 297-9092, [www.waltsorganic.com](http://www.waltsorganic.com)