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The biggest challenge to gardening in the valley is scheduling plants around frost/freeze season. Frosts are more frequent than the USDA Hardiness Zone and climatic temperature data indicate.

There are 3 seasons of gardening in Antelope Valley:

1. Spring (frosts frequent)
2. Summer (hopefully no frost)
3. Autumn (great until freezes hit)

Due to the frosts, season extension is important. For spring protection, a strong wind-safe structure is needed. In summer and fall, floating row covers are adequate until the continuous cold weather settles in as the growing season winds down for the year.

SPRING PLANTING

Spring planting season is March 20 to May 21. There are frequent night frosts, high winds, winter storms, but toward the end, the days are warm. Only cold-tolerant vegetables should be planted at this time, and be prepared to protect your crop. Plants grown in tunnels will do better.

Very Hardy – Plant early

- Horseradish
- Kale
- Lettuce
- Parsley
- English Peas
- Spinach
- Turnip
- Brussels Sprouts
- Rhubarb
- Asparagus crowns
- Onion transplants*

Somewhat Hardy – Plant 2-3 weeks later

- Cauliflower
- Beets
- Carrots
- Bok/Pak Choi*
- Radish
- Potato
- Chard
- Parsnip
- Broccoli*
- Cabbages*
- Brussels Sprouts*
- Rhubarb
- Asparagus crowns

* Transplants

SUMMER PLANTING

Summer planting season will usually begin somewhere near May 22 and extends through early July. After that date, there will not be enough time for warm-season plants to ripen. Short-season varieties are recommended here.

Warm-season vegetables must be protected from all frost or you will lose the crop.

Warm-Season Vegetables

- Celery (transplants)
 - Green Beans / Snap beans
 - New Zealand “Spinach”
 - Sweet Corn (multiple plantings)
 - Beans
 - Cucurbits (squash, melon, etc.)
 - Okra
 - Eggplant*
 - Tomatoes*
 - Peppers*
 - Super Sweet Corn
- * Transplants

In most years, having pumpkins for Halloween won’t work; however they do store well. Grow early varieties and plant in June. Peanuts and sweet potatoes will probably not have a long enough season.

FALL CROPS

Fall planting season begins in mid-July and continues until about August 25. Hardier plants can be sown after this date.

Be prepared to use a floating row cover or other frost protections. The first frosts of fall come early, but tend to be right around freezing and in calm conditions, which are easy conditions for cold protection.

Most of the plants for fall will be the somewhat cold-tolerant vegetables like greens and some root crops. Carrots, collards, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and peas will usually be planted in July, but the others can be planted in succession later.

Garlic can be planted in September or October for harvest the following year.

Fall is an excellent time to put in a cover crop to improve your soil. Clovers, cereal rye, wheat, mustard, and vetch are all common choices.

FROST SEASON

Probability of frost after date (spring) or before (fall) is shown below. (NWS Data)

Type	75%	50%	25%
Last (spring)	May 3	May 21	June 6
First (fall)	Oct. 9	Sept. 23	Sept. 5

The average growing season is 118 days but that is extraordinarily variable. It is usually a little longer.