Choosing and growing adapted vegetable varieties

by Stephen L. Love, Stuart Parkinson, and Kathy Noble

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YOU ARE A SHORT-SEASON, HIGH-ALTITUDE GARDENER IF:

You live in Idaho at an elevation above 4,500 feet, **OR**

Your USDA hardiness zone is 4 or lower, **OR**

You have a frost-free growing season of 110 days or less

INTRODUCTION

Growing vegetables in Idaho's short-season, high-altitude regions requires special knowledge and willingness to employ methods and techniques that are not necessary for those living in milder climates. The PNW497 publication, "Short Season Vegetable Gardening" (http://info.ag.uidaho.edu/Resources/PDFs/PNW0497.pdf) outlines the general principles of vegetable production in cold climates, including season-extending techniques. This publication supplements PNW497 and provides information specific to selecting and growing the best varieties for Idaho's short-season climates.

These recommendations result, in part, from a survey of preferred vegetable varieties completed in 2006. Gardeners were polled to determine varieties preferred where the production season is limited. Additional sources of information include author experience and published references listing early vegetable varieties.

Fruit and vegetable varieties adapted to short-season, high-altitude areas may be less available in the nursery trade than mainstream varieties. To get the best varieties, you may need to spend time locating nurseries that specialize in early-maturing crops. For many of the best early varieties, you may need to buy seed and self-produce transplants.

In addition to the variety lists, this publication includes growing tips for each vegetable crop to improve the odds of success. This information is not a comprehensive guide to growing vegetables, and you should plan to supplement it with general gardening books and web sites. Also, the varieties listed are not the only ones that can succeed in a short-season, high elevation garden. New varieties are constantly being developed and gardeners often enjoy trying suitable prospects. The crop variety lists are in alphabetical sequence and do not reflect order of preference.

An array of vegetables can be successfully grown in Idaho's short-season, high-altitude climates.

University of Idaho Extension

SHORT SEASON VEGETABLE VARIETIES

For purposes of this publication, vegetables are divided into three categories based on climate adaptation.

- Cool-season hardy crops—these are adapted to cool, frost-prone climates, and generally grow well in all of Idaho's short-season, high-altitude areas.
- Cool-season tender crops—these are well-adapted to much of Idaho and can usually be grown easily in all but the harshest short-season, high-altitude areas if season extending techniques are used to protect them from frost and aid establishment.
- Warm-season tender crops—these are not adapted to climates found in much of Idaho, much less the harshest short-season, high-altitude areas. They are damaged by frost and require a long, warm growing season. If these crops are grown, extra measures should be taken to modify growing conditions.

COOL-SEASON HARDY VEGETABLES

You can successfully produce frost-hardy vegetables in all or most of Idaho's short-season, high-altitude regions. Most commercially available varieties within each crop are adequately adapted and will grow well. For this reason, variety selection is associated more with personal preference than with production capability.

Asparagus—Winter survival varies among varieties and it is important to choose only the hardiest available. The varieties listed below should be hardy anywhere in Idaho. Note that all-male (AM) hybrids are higher yielding and have larger spears.

Because asparagus is a perennial, it must be managed to maximize winter survival. The first step is to plant correctly so that soil provides some winter protection. Plant crowns in a trench with the top of the crown 6 to 10 inches below the soil surface. Cover with 2 inches of soil, then periodically add more soil (without burying the sprouts) until the top of the crown is 6 to 8 inches below the surface. Do not harvest spears during the first spring after planting. Harvest lightly the second spring. In subsequent years, harvest normally but always let the last sprouts of the spring develop ferns and renew the energy stored in the crowns.

Asparagus requires consistently moist soil. In the high desert regions, it should be placed in the garden where it will receive frequent, deep irrigations.

Asparagus is one of the earliest vegetables in the garden.

Asparagus

VARIETY	RELATIVE MATURITY	NOTES
Jersey Giant (AM)	Early	Hardiest Jersey hybrid, green spears w/purple bracts
Jersey Knight (AM)	Late	Large spears, green w/purple bracts
Jersey Supreme (AM)	Early	Adapted to cool climates, large green spears
Mary Washington	Medium	Old standard variety, light green spears
Purple Passion	Early	Burgundy-colored spears, tender
Sweet Purple	Medium	Burgundy-colored, very sweet and tender

Beets—All varieties are suitably adapted and selection usually involves personal preference for flavor, root color, and size. Plant beet seed directly into the garden about two weeks before the last spring frost for best early growth.

Beets

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Bull's Blood	55	Dark red with interior stripes, foliage also edible
Chioggia	55	Interior red and white striped, round, extra sweet
Detroit Dark Red	65	Dark red, old standard variety, wide adaptation
Early Wonder	55	Dark red, uniform color, best on loam soils
Golden	55	Yellow-gold root, tender and sweet, edible tops
Red Ace (Hybrid)	54	Dark red, early maturity, sweet flavor
Ruby Queen	55	Dark red, small and round, wide adaptation

Broccoli prefers a climate without summer heat.

Broccoli—All varieties commonly grown in the US are adapted to short-season production.

If you want a single harvest of large heads, choose hybrid varieties. If you would rather have continuous harvest at the expense of crown uniformity, the open pollinated varieties work best.

Transplanting is the best method to establish broccoli because this helps maintain good quality. Summer heat, common to the high desert areas of Idaho, creates strong flavors and woody texture and transplanting helps ensure that the harvest is complete before hot summer temperatures arrive. Freezing temperatures as low as 22°F will not damage young broccoli plants so you can transplant up to three weeks before the average last frost.

Broccoli

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
DiCiccio	90	Large uniform heads, many side shoots, late maturity
Green Comet (Hybrid)	40	Very early maturity, medium to large heads
Green Goliath	56	Large heads, many side shoots
Gypsy (Hybrid)	58	Uniform, medium heads
Premium Crop (Hybrid)	58	Early maturity, medium-sized heads
Rapini Cima di Rapa	40	A small form of broccoli, sharp bittersweet flavor
Waltham	74	Cold resistant, medium heads, large side shoots

Brussels Sprouts—Of the cabbage relatives commonly grown in Idaho, Brussels sprouts are the least hardy and need the longest season to mature. The short-statured varieties are the best choice for production in cool-season regions of Idaho. Transplant Brussels sprouts about one week before the average last spring frost to get them off to a fast start. Protect the young transplants from moderate to severe frost (less than 27°F).

Brussels Sprouts

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Catskill	90	Long stalks, numerous heads
Jade Cross (Hybrid)	80	Heavy yield, solid heads
Long Island	90	Heavy yield, round dark green heads

Cabbage—All commercially available varieties are adapted to short-season production. Your biggest problem will be choosing among the multitude of colors, head shapes, sizes, and leaf appearances.

Transplanting is the best method to establish cabbage. Temperatures down to 25°F will not damage the transplants so you can place them into the garden up to two weeks before the average last frost.

Cabbage

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Copenhagen Market	68	Medium-sized solid heads, round shape
Danish Ball Head	110	Large dense heads, good for storage
Golden Acre	65	Medium-sized solid heads, good home garden variety
Gonzales Summer	66	Miniature dense heads
Primax	60	Small heads, resistant to splitting
Red Acre	75	Medium-sized red heads, best red for storage
Savoy Express	55	Small compact heads, crinkle-leaf type
Wong Bok	80	Chinese-type cabbage, medium-sized heads, good cooked

Carrots need a little fall frost to improve sweetness.

Carrots—All orange-colored varieties are adapted to short-season Idaho conditions.

Carrots are not recommended for transplanting because the edible roots are prone to malformation if disturbed during growth. Seedlings can withstand light frosts, so you can plant the seed two weeks before the average last spring frost.

One of the greatest difficulties in growing carrots is getting the shallowly planted seed to germinate in Idaho's dry climate. The soil tends to dry out at seed depth (less than ½ inch). To maintain good moisture for germination, provide frequent, light irrigations or place organic mulch or plastic wrap over the seed bed. Plastic wrap not only traps moisture but also raises the soil temperature, resulting in rapid seedling emergence. However, you must remove plastic wrap immediately after emergence or seedlings will be damaged.

Parsnips are grown like carrots and are also adapted to production in Idaho's harshest climates.

Carrots

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Danver's Half Long	75	Broad short roots, good for clay soil, heat resistant
Lunar White	75	Long, white roots, Belgian variety, good raw or cooked
Nantes Coreless	89	Medium length, blunt-tipped roots, sweet flavor
Sugar Snax (Hybrid)	68	Long, thin roots, sweet flavor
Tendersweet	70	Long, thin roots, good for garden production
Thumbelina	60	Small, short roots, small core, crack resistant

Keeping cauliflower heads in the dark improves taste and color.

Cauliflower—All varieties commonly grown in the US are adapted to short-season production.

You may prefer self-blanching varieties, which simplify the process of producing large, bright white heads.

Like broccoli, cauliflower is best established by transplanting because this helps avoid summer heat that can cause problems with flavor and head color. Freezing temperatures as low as 25°F will not damage young cauliflower plants so you can transplant up to two weeks before the average last frost.

Cauliflower

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Fremont (Hybrid)	62	Large bright white heads, self-blanching
Early Snowball	60	Medium-sized heads, self-blanching
Self-blanche	71	Medium-sized white heads, self-blanching
Snow Crown (Hybrid)	68	Large very white heads, not self-blanching

Collards and Kale—These vegetables are so closely related that some horticulturists consider them to be varieties of the same plant. In general, kale leaves are crinkled, while collards are smooth. Their growing needs are identical. All varieties commonly grown in the US are adapted to short-season production. Either direct-seeding or transplanting are suitable methods for establishing collards and kale. Transplanting will hasten your harvest. Low temperatures, near 22°F, will not damage the transplants so you can place them in the garden up to three weeks before the average last frost.

Collards and Kale

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Blue Max	68	Dark blue-green, slightly crinkled leaves
Red Russian	50	Red and blue crinkled leaves, tender, very hardy
Redbor	60	Red, curly leaves, frost tolerant
Top Bunch (Hybrid)	67	Medium green, smooth leaves
Vates	56	Large green leaves, frost resistant

Garlic—Only adapted, early maturing varieties are suitable for production in Idaho's short season areas. Garlic comes in two types, hardneck and softneck. Of the two types, hardneck varieties tend to grow larger cloves and provide a greater range of flavors. Softneck varieties tend to have milder flavor and store better. The list below is a sampling of many varieties that can be grown in Idaho.

Hardneck varieties produce best if the cloves are planted in the fall. In Idaho's harsh climates, fall-planted cloves must be placed at least one inch deep and protected with a 6 to 8 inch layer of mulch. Softneck varieties should be planted as early in the spring as the soil can be worked. Garlic can withstand severe frost and does not need protection from spring cold snaps.

Garlic

VARIETY	RELATIVE MATURITY	NOTES
Hardneck		
German Red	Early	Very productive, cloves large w/ red skin
Merrifield Rocambole	Early	Very large cloves
Softneck		
Inchellium Red	Early	Large-med bulbs, red-blotched, mild flavor
New York White	Early	Productive, cloves small & blushed purple
Susanville	Early	Large white cloves, stores well

Kohlrabi—All varieties commonly grown in the US are adapted to short-season production.

Either direct-seeding or transplanting are suitable methods for establishing kohlrabi. Transplanting will hasten harvest, but may reduce bulb quality. High temperatures cause poor quality in the bulbs, so transplanting may be the method of choice in the warmer, high desert locales, to ensure that harvest occurs before the temperature rises. Low temperatures to near 25°F will not damage the transplants, so they can be transplanted up to two weeks before the average last frost.

Kohlrabi

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Purple Vienna	60	Purple round bulbs
White Vienna	55	White round bulbs

Leeks—A close relative of onions, leeks are non-bulbing and are grown for their long, mild-flavored lower stem. Most commercially available varieties will grow in short-season Idaho regions. Leeks are very tolerant of frost in the spring, but can be damaged by hard frost in the fall and should be harvested before the cold weather sets in. Leeks take a long season to reach maximum size and should be transplanted into the garden about two weeks prior to last average spring frost. However, leeks do not need to reach maximum size to be harvestable, making it possible to grow them over a shorter season. They can be harvested when the underground stem reaches a diameter of ½ inch.

Producing a good quality leek (very long and very white) requires blanching techniques to keep a large portion of the stem underground during growth. To successfully blanch leeks, dig a shallow (8 inch) trench two to three weeks before the last average frost, and place the transplants at the bottom. The transplants should be at least 4 inches tall. As the plants grow, periodically add soil into the trench and eventually hill soil up around the plants. Take care not to bury the growing point, located at the base of the youngest leaves.

Leeks

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
American Flag	95	Long stems, home garden favorite
Kilima	70	Long stems, tolerates light frost
King Richard	79	Smaller, early, mild flavor

Leeks are a mild alternative to green onions.

Lettuce—If you want lettuce for early consumption, choose leaf lettuce varieties. For best quality, select butterhead or head (iceberg type) lettuce. All leaf lettuce varieties are adapted to Idaho's short season areas, but only a few head lettuce varieties do well in the high desert climates because of their tendency to bolt (produce seed and become bitter) in warm weather.

For very early lettuce, consider transplanting part of the crop. Otherwise, it is simpler to direct-seed into the garden. Plant lettuce seed up to one month or transplant two weeks before the average last spring frost. In most of Idaho's short-season, high-altitude locations, lettuce can be grown all summer long if you take time and effort to plant consecutive crops every few weeks, up until about the first of August.

Lettuce

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Leaf		
Black Seeded Simpson	40	Light green frilly leaves, likes cool weather
Classic Mix Mesclun	40	Blend of six red and green leaf varieties
Freckles	60	Leaves green, crunchy, Austrian heirloom
Lollo Rosso	53	Leaves green tinged red, tolerant to cold and heat
Red Dear Tongue	60	Leaves red tinged, slow to bolt, long-time favorite
Red Grand Rapids	45	Slightly rumpled, bronze-red leaves
Red Sails	45	Slightly rumpled, bronze-red leaves
Head (Iceberg)		
Salinas	70	Resistant to bolting, withstands summer heat
Ithaca	65	Slow to bolt, resists bitterness
Butterhead		
Bibb	65	Medium-sized heads, premium flavor
Buttercrunch	65	Slow to bolt, mild flavor
Nancy (Boston Head)	55	Medium-sized heads
Romaine Winter Density	54	Miniature compact heads, slow to bolt

Onions are sensitive to daylength and only adapted varieties will grow bulbs.

Onions—Onion growth and productivity are influenced not only by cold temperatures, but also by daylength, meaning that if they are not adapted they may not grow a bulb. Consequently, variety choice is very important. The varieties listed are only a sample of what are suitable for growing in Idaho's short-season, high-altitude regions. Some varieties of shallots and pearl onions are also adapted.

Onions need a fairly long season to completely mature, but are very useful in the short-season garden because they can be harvested and eaten at any stage of growth. You should transplant onions to make sure they size up during summer warmth. Spanish types can be transplanted using sets, while large, sweet types can be established by growing or purchasing green transplants. Growing onions from sets will reduce the days to harvest listed by as much as 20 days. Place onions in the garden two weeks prior to the average last spring frost.

Onions

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Cipollini	100	Cold hardy, small flat bulbs, stores well, spicy
Red Mars	108	Cold hardy, large red bulbs
Walla Walla (Sweet)	105	Cold hardy, extra large white bulbs, mild
White Sweet Spanish	110	Cold hardy, large white bulbs, good storage
Yellow Sweet Spanish	110	Cold hardy, large yellow bulbs, good storage

Peas will stop setting pods if the days get too hot.

Garden Peas—Peas will grow in any or all of Idaho's short-season areas. All available varieties are adapted, including shelled and edible-pod peas.

Deciding when to plant peas is sometimes difficult. They must be planted early so they flower and set pods before warm summer temperatures negatively impact growth. On the other hand, cold, wet soils of early spring can cause the seed to rot. Ideally, peas should be direct-seeded about one month before average last spring frost and after average daily soil temperatures reach 50°F. If soils are excessively wet and cold, it may pay to delay planting for a week or two. The seed will emerge better if it is soaked overnight in warm water before planting.

Garden Peas

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Shelled		
Dakota	57	Small pods, good for northern gardens
Freezonian	60	Long pods, tolerant to root rot
Green Arrow	68	Long pods, cold tolerant
Lincoln	67	Long pods, heat tolerant
Little Marvel	60	Small pods, cold tolerant
Wando	70	Long pods, cold tolerant, resistant to root rot
Edible Pod		
Oregon Sugar Pod	65	Bush type, flat pods
Sugar Ann	56	Compact plants, good for gardens
Sugar Snap	66	Vining habit, cold and heat tolerant

Summer heat can give radishes a pungent bite and woody texture.

Radish—All commercially available varieties are adapted. You can direct-seed radishes into the garden up to one month before the average last spring frost. Plant a new crop every two weeks for a constant supply. You may prefer to avoid summer planting because warm weather causes radishes to become pungent and woody.

Radish

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Cherry Belle	24	Round, dark red root
Crimson Giant	28	Round, very large red roots
French Breakfast	25	Oblong, red roots with white tips
Sparkler	25	Round, red roots with white tips
White Icicle	27	Long, white roots

Rutabaga—All available varieties are adapted. Do not transplant rutabagas because this may result in deformed roots. Direct-seed them up to one month before the last average spring frost. Rutabagas are relatively easy to grow in any of Idaho's short-season regions.

Rutabaga

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
American Purple Top	90	Yellow roots with purple crowns, sweet

Spinach—This is very easy to grow and all varieties will produce well anywhere in Idaho.

The best varieties are those considered "long standing" because they will stay in harvestable condition longer before going to seed. You can transplant spinach to speed up the first harvest, but it is usually direct-seeded two weeks before average last spring frost. Plant spinach seed at intervals of two to three weeks in order to maintain a constant supply of tender leaves.

Spinach

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Bloomsdale Long Standing	48	Semi-crinkled, glossy dark green leaves
Giant Nobel	43	Large smooth leaves, long standing
Melody (Hybrid)	42	Large green savoy leaves
Razzle Dazzle	30	Small arrow-shape leaves, good fresh or cooked

Swiss Chard—All available varieties are adapted. The main difference between varieties is color and size of leaves. Swiss chard is closely related to table beets and growing practices are similar for the two crops. Because chard is grown for the leaves, time needed to reach maturity is very short. You can transplant Swiss chard to speed first harvest, but it is best direct-seeded up to two weeks before average last spring frost.

Swiss chard

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Bright Lights	55	Very large leaves and petioles, red, tender
Fordhook Giant	60	Green petioles, large leaves, cold and heat tolerant
Rhubarb	60	Red petioles, large leaves

Swiss chard is related to table beets but is grown only for the leaves.

Turnip—All commercially available varieties are adapted. Do not transplant turnips because this may result in deformed roots. Plant seed directly into the garden up to a month before the average last spring frost.

Turnip

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Purple Top White Globe	55	White root with purple top
Tokyo Cross	35	White flattened globes

COOL-SEASON TENDER VEGETABLES

These vegetables will usually produce within the season typical of Idaho's short-season, high-altitude regions, if not injured by spring frost. They require some early season protection and may benefit from being planted in a warm microclimate. Selecting early maturing varieties helps ensure success with these crops.

Garden Beans—Early maturing varieties, usually bush types, are best adapted to Idaho's short-season, high-altitude regions. Other types of beans, such as scarlet runner beans, lima beans, cowpeas, and soybeans are not adapted to Idaho's coldest regions.

Bean plants are very sensitive to frost and consequently should be planted only when all chance of a spring freeze is past. Fortunately, once planted, the pods reach picking stage very quickly, making it a suitable crop for any locale with at least two months of frost-free weather. In order to ensure good germination of beans, make sure to plant undamaged seed and do not presoak the seed before planting.

Garden Beans

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Blue Lake Bush	58	Old standard variety, wide adaptation
Provider	50	Wide adaptation, high yield
Slenderette	53	High yield, slim straight pods
Tendergreen Improved	57	High yield, long straight pods
Pencil Pod	58	Early for a wax-type, med-length pods

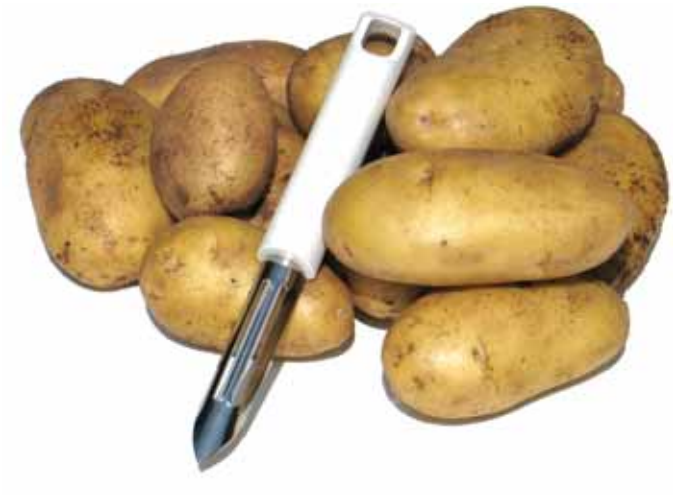
Potatoes—Early maturing varieties are not essential but will be more likely to provide potatoes in a short-season climate. This crop is an excellent choice for any short-season garden but is considered tender because the foliage is damaged by frost. However, the leaves recover quickly and plants will produce well even if damaged multiple times. Plant the tuber pieces about three weeks before average last spring frost.

Potatoes

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Red Norland	85	Very early, round red tubers
Russet Norkotah	85	Very early, long russet tubers
Yukon Gold	90	White skin, yellow flesh

Sweet Corn—Early varieties are essential to success in the short-season garden. In locations where soil temperatures do not consistently reach 65°F, it may be best to avoid using the supersweet varieties because they have problems with germination and emergence in cold soils.

Corn is not commonly transplanted, but it can be done to speed harvest in the shortest-season areas. Transplanting should be done two weeks after the last frost. More commonly, you can direct-seed into the garden one week before the average last spring frost.



Potato harvest can begin whenever the tubers are big enough to eat.

Sweet corn may be hard to grow in the harshest of Idaho's climates.

Sweet Corn

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Baby Corn	65	Very small ears for immature harvest, stir-fry, pickles
Earlivee	58	Northern adapted, yellow, normal sweet type
Early Sunglow	66	Grows well in adverse weather, normal sweet type
Fantasy	75	Bicolor, supersweet type
Marcross	70	Yellow, normal sweet type
Northern Xtra Sweet	67	Yellow, normal sweet type
Nordic	70	Bicolor, supersweet type
Seneca Dawn	69	Bicolor, good vigor, supersweet type

TENDER WARM-SEASON VEGETABLES

Many tender vegetables may not grow to maturity in a typical garden situation in the short-season, high-altitude regions of Idaho. This is especially true of cucumbers, tomatoes, and peppers. In some areas, squash and pumpkins may also be difficult. All are very sensitive to frost and some may be damaged even by non-freezing cold temperatures in the spring. Only the earliest maturing and hardiest varieties have a chance to succeed in short-season locations.

You will need to protect all of these crops from both spring and fall frost. Cucumbers, peppers, and tomatoes will need to be planted in a warm corner of the yard and may need the heat-producing effects of a greenhouse or row-cover. Even with the best of care, in some years these crops may fail.

Cucumber—These are excellent plants for container or greenhouse production. Bush varieties can be grown where space is limited.

Cucumbers should be transplanted into the garden two to three weeks after last average spring frost and subsequently protected. Cucumbers transplant best and subsequently grow faster when plants are very small, dark green, and vigorously growing.

Cucumber

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Slicers		
Marketmore 76	58	Long, dark green, withstands adverse weather
Bush Champion	65	Dwarf plant, long green fruit, good for containers
Salad Bush	57	Compact plant, medium-sized fruits, high yield
Spacemaster	60	Compact plant, green fruit, good for containers
Sweet Success	50	Long dark green fruit, seedless, long production season
Picklers		
Cool Breeze	45	Small fruit, French cornichon type, never bitter
Northern Pickling	48	Small, light green, high yield
Wisconsin SMR58	55	Small, light green, bred for northern production
Pickle Bush (Hybrid)	55	Small, light green, compact plants, good for containers

Bush cucumbers grow and produce well in containers.

Peppers—This is an excellent crop for container production. In the coolest regions, you may want to put peppers in a warm location or provide season-long protection such as you get with a row cover.

Transplant peppers into the garden two to three weeks after the last average spring frost and protect when necessary. Transplants can be fairly large, but any blooms or fruit that are set on the plants should be removed at the time they are placed in the garden. This will speed early growth and ultimately reduce the time to harvest.

Peppers

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Sweet		
Ace	70	Sweet, red when mature
California Wonder	72	Large, red when mature
Fooled You	65	Green jalapeño type, not hot
North Star (Hybrid)	70	Red when mature, bred for the North
Yankee Bell	80	Red when mature, bred for the North
Yellow Cheese	55	Yellow when mature, good fresh or pickled
Hot		
Anaheim Chili	79	Green turning red, mildly hot
Hungarian Yellow Wax	75	Yellow turning red, mildly hot

Pumpkins will ripen even after a light frost kills the leaves.

Pumpkins—If you live in the harshest of Idaho's climates, you may not be able to grow pumpkins. In the warmest of Idaho's harsh regions, most pumpkin varieties will grow fine. However, unless fall frost protection is feasible, early, small-fruited varieties are best.

Pumpkins should be transplanted two to three weeks after the last average spring frost and protected from wind and frost. Your best transplant success will be with very small, vigorously growing plants. In valley locations, pumpkins will grow without warming techniques once established.

Pumpkins

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Autumn Gold (Hybrid)	90	Small size, early orange color, high yield
Baby Bear	105	Small orange fruit
Funny Face	105	Medium size, dark orange fruit
Jack Be Little	90	Very small, dark orange, used for decoration
Jack O' Lantern	100	Medium size, light orange fruit
Lumina	100	Medium size, white skin, gold flesh

Summer squash is a good crop for frost-prone areas because it matures quickly.

Squash—Summer squash, because it is harvested immature, is a short-season crop and is more likely than winter squash to consistently produce a harvestable crop. Winter squash may need fall frost protection for late maturing, large-fruited varieties.

Transplant squash two to three weeks after the last average spring frost and protect from wind and frost. Like pumpkin, squash transplants best as very small, vigorously growing plants and does not necessarily need implementation of warming techniques to supplement summer temperatures.

Squash

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Summer		
Black Beauty (Zucchini)	60	Long, blocky, dark green color, white flesh
Papaya Pear	42	Pear shape, compact plant, heavy production
Sunny Delight	40	Scallop type, bright yellow, continuous production
Yellow Crookneck	60	Six inches long, deep yellow color, continuous harvest
Winter		
Blue Hubbard	110	Blue-gray skin, 10-15 lb, yellow flesh, long storage
Buttercup	100	Dark green skin, 3-5 lb, golden flesh
Waltham Butternut	85	Tan skin, 3-5 lb, orange flesh
Table King	85	Green skin, ribbed, 3-4 lb, golden flesh

Selection of early varieties is critical to success with tomatoes in a short-season area.

Tomatoes—These are an excellent choice for greenhouse or container production.

You can establish tomatoes by using relatively large transplants in order to bring them into production early. Transplants should be placed in the garden two to three weeks after the last average spring frost and protected as necessary. If plants have any blossoms or fruit, be sure to pinch them off during transplanting. Tomatoes benefit from the use of warming techniques such as planting against a south-facing structure, planting on black plastic, or using plant or row covers.

For more information on growing tomatoes in short-season, high-altitude areas, consult "Growing Tomatoes in Cool, Short-Season Locations" in the Short-Season, High-Altitude Gardening Series: http://info.ag.uidaho.edu/pdf/BUL/BUL0864.pdf

Tomatoes

VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	NOTES
Better Bush	72	Large, red, bred for container planting
Champion	62	Large, red, good fruit set in cold climates
Early Goliath	60	Largest early variety, dark red fruit, good slicer
Fourth of July	49	Medium size, red, one of earliest varieties
Golden Girl	69	Small to medium size, gold color, high yield, sweet
Northern Exposure	67	Medium-large, red, compact, good in high elevations
Phoebe's	65	Large, red, bred in Rexburg, ID; hard to find
Roma	62	Small-medium, red, oval shape, good for sauce
Siletz	57	Medium size, dark red, seedless slicer, full flavor
SubArctic Maxi	48	Small-medium, red, recommended for high elevations
Sweet 100	65	Small, red, very prolific, sweet flavor

Find more gardening resources and publications online at
extension.uidaho.edu/homegard.asp

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Stephen L. Love is a Community Horticulture Specialist in the Department of Plant, Soil, and Entomological Sciences at the University of Idaho Aberdeen Research and Extension Center. **Stuart Parkinson** is an agricultural extension educator with the University of Idaho District IV Cooperative Extension in Preston, ID. **Kathy Noble** is a landscape architect in Hailey, Idaho.

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