



Lunch Break
HELP FOR TODAY • HOPE FOR TOMORROW

LUNCH BREAK &
FULL SUN PROJECTS

PROJECT CITIZEN GARDENER

2025 GUIDE FOR DONATING FOOD



OUR MISSION: GROWING WITH GRATITUDE

Thank you for expressing interest in **Lunch Break's Project Citizen Gardener**. We welcome **home gardeners and students** of any age who wish to grow fresh produce on our behalf and accrue school service hours too.

While the rise of food costs have skyrocketed, so have the numbers of guests that visit our pantry and dining room each week. One of Lunch Break's biggest expenses is fresh produce -- and your generous efforts in growing and donating fresh vegetables help to drive down our costs. As a result, we initiated **Project Citizen Gardener** to encourage local gardeners to participate in helping us to provide the poundage of produce that we need.

STEP 1: GROWING VEGETABLES

Growing food in your own backyard is a rewarding experience on many levels. Your participation with **Project Citizen Gardener** not only produces personal satisfaction and self sufficiency, but also helps to feed individuals and families who need it most. Like most things in life, gardening is an activity that gets easier with time, dedication, and practice - **so don't give up!**

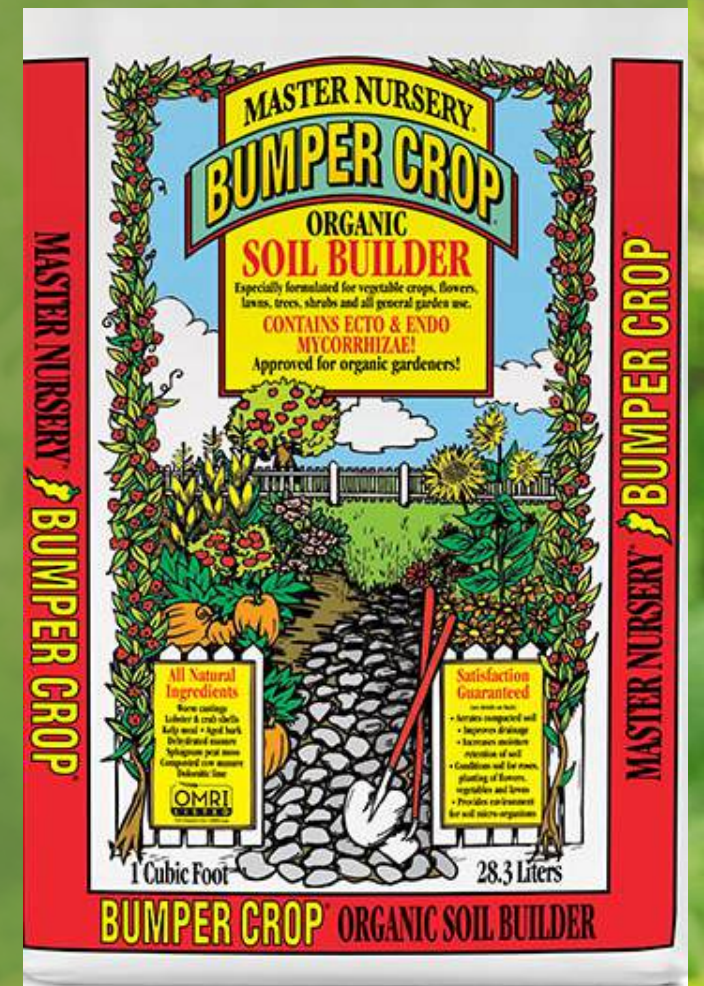
This first step will describe what you'll need to start a garden, the vegetable varieties that our guests love, as well as some tips and things to look out for when growing food.

GETTING STARTED:

PLANTS & SEEDS: Can be purchased at a garden center or online. We recommend choosing organic/ non-GMO plants & seeds if they're available. Please read on to learn about varieties our guests love.

GROWING SPACE: Whether you have an established garden with raised beds & fencing (critical for deer) or containers in your yard, almost anything can be fabricated for growing vegetables. Do some research and get creative!

GOOD SOIL: Having excellent soil quality is the first step to successful gardening. **The Master Nursery Bumper Crop** is one of the best bagged soil products to amend/ boost soil nutrients for healthy plants. It can be found at select plant and garden centers. If looking for excellent soil in bulk, **Molzon's in Lincroft** carries and delivers **mushroom compost** by the yard. It's used in a lot of local community gardens and is the perfect medium for growing superior vegetables.



WATER and SUNLIGHT: Having ample water and sunlight are critical for plants to thrive. Every plant has different requirements so make sure to do research on plant needs so you know what to expect.

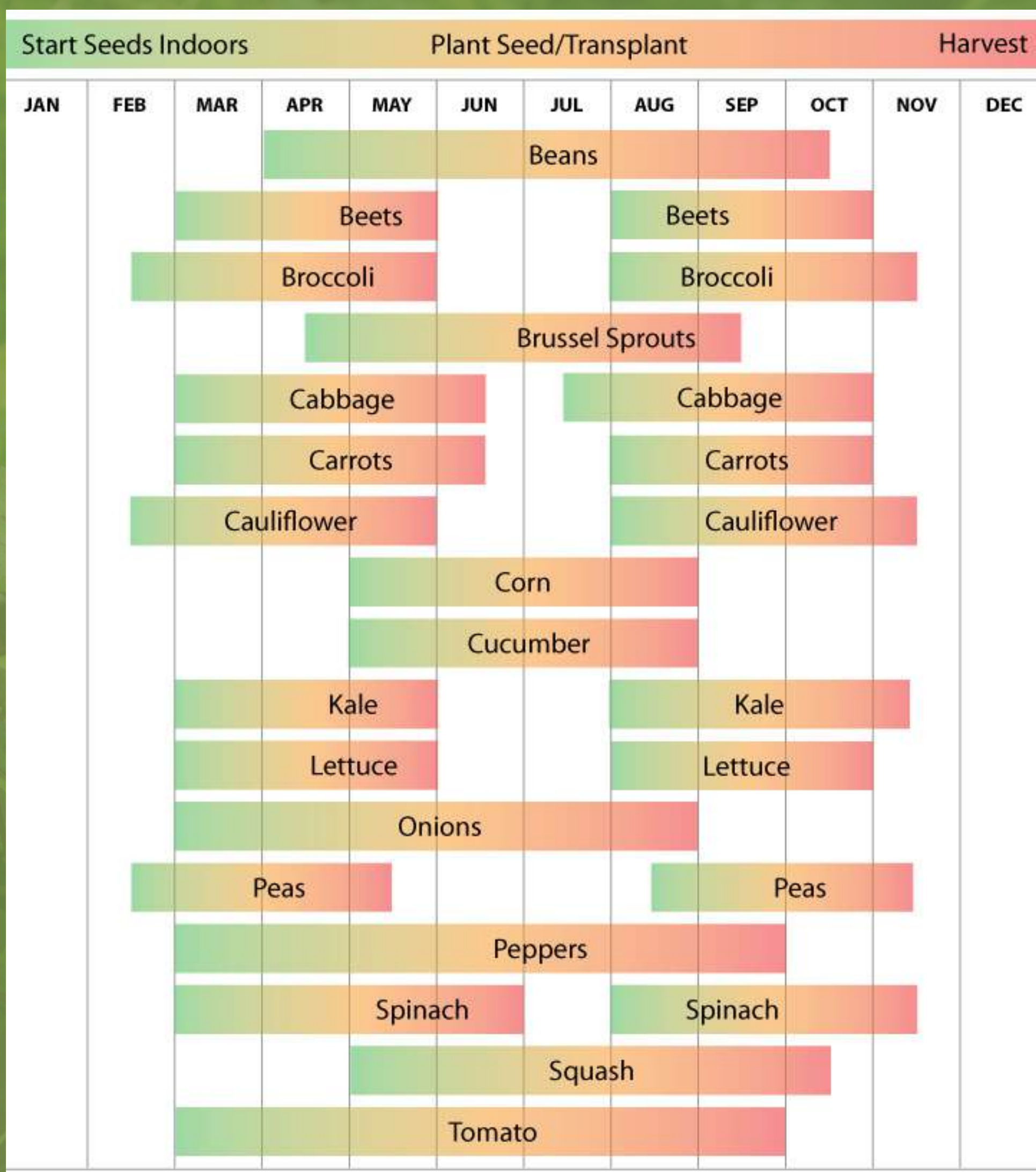
KITCHEN & PANTRY FAVORITES

- Lettuces:
 - Romaine
 - Iceberg
 - Butterhead
- Kale - Lacinato
- Collard Greens
- Swiss Chard
- Carrots
- Beets
- Radishes - Daikon
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Green Beans
- Parsley - Italian Flat
- Basil - Italian
- Peppers:
 - Bell
 - Poblano
- Tomatoes:
 - Slicers
 - Beefsteak
 - Heirloom Varieties
- Summer Squash:
 - Zucchini
- Ginger

WE ALSO ACCEPT:

- Leeks
- Scallions
- Celery
- Fennel
- Kale - Curly
- Radicchio
- Cabbage:
 - Green
 - Napa
- Cilantro
- Dill
- Basil - Thai
- Tomatoes - Cherry
- Cucumbers:
 - English Long
- Eggplant
 - Black Beauty
 - Japanese
- Butternut Squash
- Melons

EASTERN MONMOUTH COUNTY (ZONE 7B) VEGETABLE GROWING TIMELINE



TOOLS AND TIPS:

- Greens and root vegetables are best **started from SEED**. Carefully follow the directions on the packet -- It's easier than you think!
- **PLANT NATIVE FLOWERS** for bees & other beneficial pollinators. They'll help protect your veggie plants from pests.
- Using organic pesticides like **BT and NEEM OIL** will save your plants from caterpillars and other pests - Try to spray plants at least once a week for maintenance.
- **WEEDS** come with the territory. Try stay on top of them before they get out of hand and your plants begin to suffer.

STEP 2: PREPARING PRODUCE

If you've made it to this step, congratulations! You've successfully grown your own food. Vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, summer squash, and eggplant are pretty much ready to go once they're picked. However other veggies, like carrots and lettuce, need a little more preparation before they're ready to donate.

WASHING VEGGIES:

All veggies are expected to be free of dirt, bugs, and debris to the best of the growers' ability.

GREENS: Once thoroughly washed, greens remain fresher and store more easily on our shelves if the bottom of stems or base of plant is put in bag or container with a small amount of water. This also applies to fennel & beets!

ROOTS: Carrots, beets, and radishes require some scrubbing to fully remove dirt. Using a scrub brush will make it easier - having your friends or family to help wash is helpful too! Lunch Break appreciates removal of carrot tops for the purpose of space in the pantry.

PACKAGING: Use whatever you have on hand to package fresh produce. If you are reusing an old box, bag, or container, just make sure it is clean and sanitary. Some examples of things to package food are: used fruit containers, cardboard boxes, and supermarket produce bags.

STEP 3: DROP OFF

LUNCH BREAK HOURS:

MONDAY- FRIDAY:

10 am to 2 pm

SATURDAY:

9 am to 12 pm

SUNDAY:

Closed

Cleaned and washed produce can be delivered to:



Lunch Break

121 Drs James Parker Blvd

Red Bank, NJ 07701

732-747-8577

DIRECTIONS FOR DROP OFF: Please use Bridge Avenue to get to the back of the building. Park in the spaces directly across from the building and come to the **Donation Room**. Your "Gift" will then be recorded in our Donation Book and at that time, you will get a receipt for your records. **If you are a student accruing service hours, you can present your signed service hour form for your school and Lunch Break.**

Thank you for helping Lunch Break make a difference to those who need it most.



Connect with Lunch Break:

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