

ZONE 11 GARDEN Plans



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Homestead Academy of Practical Skills ROADMAP

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ZONE 11

Garden Plans

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ZONE 11 GARDEN

Plans

SAMPLE

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Welcome to Food Prep Guide!

We are a team of women who are passionate about preserving old-world skills and passing them on to the next generation.

As fellow gardeners, we know the satisfaction of growing your own food and the value of putting nutritious, homegrown produce on your family's table.

The information in this guide was written with Zone 11's unique conditions in mind: the mild winters, the early spring planting, the long summer heat, and the generous fall growing window.



—*Stacy & Jordan*

We also know you're likely juggling work, family meals, and everything else life throws your way. This guide works WITH your busy life—giving you clear monthly priorities, quick-reference charts, and practical planting schedules.

If you're new to our brand, you should know that three words characterize how we teach, and we believe they communicate what you can expect from all of our resources:

FAITHFUL: God can multiply our efforts like He did the widow's oil and wheat (1 Kings 17). Our trust in Jesus shapes everything we do here.

FRUGAL: True frugality means making thoughtful choices that honor our resources. We focus on strategies that maximize production while minimizing waste.

EFFICIENT: Time is limited—and so is brain space. We strive to share efficient management systems alongside every skill we teach.

We're glad you're here—let's get started!

UNDERSTANDING ZONE 11

If you're new to gardening in Zone 11, you're about to discover the unique experience of truly tropical vegetable gardening—where the absence of frost opens up year-round growing possibilities that exist nowhere else in the continental United States.

Zone 11 is defined by its average minimum winter temperatures, which range from 40°F to 50°F. This tropical climate means you never experience killing frost, allowing you to grow vegetables continuously throughout the year without the dormant winter period that defines gardening in every other zone.

Instead of planning around frost dates, you'll learn to work with wet and dry seasons, hurricane patterns, and intense summer heat that can challenge even the most heat-tolerant varieties of plants. Your garden operates on a completely different rhythm than anywhere else in the continental United States.

The consistently warm climate gives you access to truly tropical vegetables that can't be grown anywhere else in the continental U.S. Crops like cassava, taro, chaya, moringa, and tropical varieties of eggplant and greens become staples rather than novelties. You can grow tomatoes and peppers as perennial plants rather than annuals, harvest year-round from herb gardens, and maintain continuous production of leafy greens during the cooler months.

Zone 11a vs. Zone 11b

Zone 11a (40-45°F minimums) includes most of Miami-Dade County, parts of Broward County in Florida, and higher elevation areas in Hawaii. Zone 11b (45-50°F minimums) covers the Florida Keys, protected South Florida coastal areas, and coastal regions of Hawaii.

This five-degree difference means Zone 11b gardeners rarely need to protect plants from cold, while Zone 11a gardeners may occasionally need to cover sensitive tropical plants during rare cold snaps.

Zone 11a may experience 1-3 nights per year when temperatures drop to the low 40s, while Zone 11b typically stays above 45°F even during the coldest weather events.



Challenges in the Zone 11 Garden

Despite year-round growing advantages, Zone 11 presents unique challenges that require specialized approaches:

Intense Summer Conditions: Summer temperatures routinely reach 90-95°F with humidity levels that can make it feel over 100°F. This heat stress affects even tropical plants, requiring strategic timing, shade structures, and heat management techniques that gardeners in other zones never encounter.

Sandy Soil Extremes: Zone 11's sandy soils drain so rapidly that nutrients wash away with rain, and water retention becomes a constant challenge. The combination of frequent heavy rains and intense sun creates a cycle of flooding and drought that tests plant resilience.

Hurricane Season: From June through November, the threat of hurricanes requires garden planning that includes wind protection, drainage management, and rapid recovery strategies. Unlike frost damage that affects individual plants, hurricanes can destroy an entire garden's infrastructure.

Pest Pressure: The year-round growing season means pest insects never experience a winter die-off. Aphids, whiteflies, nematodes, and tropical pests create constant pressure that requires integrated management strategies.

Salt Exposure: Coastal Zone 11 gardens face salt spray from ocean winds and potential saltwater intrusion that limits plant choices and requires soil amendments.

Because of these challenges, many Zone 11 gardeners succeed with raised beds, container gardens, and protected growing structures that provide more control over growing conditions.

A Note About Timing

In gardening, planting times are dictated by frost dates. Since Zone 11 doesn't have frost dates, you have incredible flexibility when planting. So, if you see a crop on the schedule for week 3 in January—and you didn't get to it in time—no problem. Plant it in February. Also, if you see a crop listed as both "start indoors" and "direct sow," it means you can choose which method to use based on your preference.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Monthly Action Plans

Simply flip to the current month, and see what needs to be done! That said, don't let these lists overwhelm you—and don't let them become your task masters. They are simply guides to help you work with Zone 11's unique growing seasons and weather patterns.

Each monthly module is designed to stand alone, so you can jump in at any time of year without feeling behind or lost.

Sample Layouts

We included three garden layouts for those who ask, "Where do I even begin?"

These aren't the only ways to arrange a garden—they're simply a starting line. (Please note they are not to scale.)

Think of them as templates that give you a concrete place to begin rather than staring at a blank space wondering how all the pieces should fit together.

Reference Charts

We also included three quick-reference charts designed to communicate information fast.

- The **Seed Starting At-a-Glance Chart** gives you a bird's eye view of your year.
- The **Staples Garden Chart** shows you which crops to prioritize if you want to grow a year's worth of vegetables for your family.
- The **Companion Planting Chart** helps you maximize your space and naturally manage pests through strategic plant partnerships.

Enjoy!



MONTHLY *Action Plans*



JANUARY

OVERVIEW: Your peak growing month! While northern gardeners huddle indoors, you're harvesting daily from thriving cool-season crops. Perfect weather for maximum garden productivity and planning tropical additions for the year ahead.



WEATHER WATCH: Average temperature 60-78°F | Peak cool-season production | Dry season conditions



PRIORITY TASKS

WEEK 1: Peak Harvest & Planning

- Harvest mature cool-season crops at their prime
- Plan this year's garden layout and crop rotation
- Check and repair irrigation systems for dry season
- Order seeds for warm-season tropical crops

WEEK 2: Indoor Seed Starting

- Start cabbage, eggplant seeds indoors
- Start kale, leeks indoors
- Start lettuce, onions, Swiss chard indoors
- Start tomato seeds indoors (mid-month timing)

WEEK 3: Direct Sow Select Crops

- Direct sow arugula, Asian greens, beans
- Direct sow beets, carrots, radish, spinach, squash
- Plant seed potatoes
- Sow peas (cool weather window closing soon)


WEEK 4: Soil Prep & Planning

- Add compost and organic matter to sandy soils
- Plan tropical fruit tree locations
- Research heat-tolerant varieties for summer
- Begin preparing beds for February transplants




PLANTING GUIDE

START INDOORS THIS MONTH



CROP	GERMINATION TIME	DAYS TO HARVEST
Cabbage	4-10 days	70-80 days
Eggplant	7-14 days	100-120 days (from seed)
Kale	4-7 days	55-65 days
Peppers	7-21 days (slow and variable)	70-80 days (to first harvest)
Swiss Chard	7-14 days	50-70 days
Tomatoes	5-10 days	75-85 days

DIRECT SOW THIS MONTH



CROP	SPACING	DAYS TO HARVEST
Lettuce	6-8" apart	45-60 days
Radishes	2" apart	25-30 days
Carrots	2-3" apart	70-80 days
Beets	3-4" apart	55-65 days
Asian Greens	4-6" apart	40-50 days
Cilantro	4" apart	30-40 days
Summer squash	36" apart	50-60 days

No transplants in January for Zone 11. Seeds started in January will be ready to transplant in February and March.



PEST ALERTS

APHIDS

Damage: They cluster on new growth, especially brassicas.

Solution: Spray with a blast of water, use insecticidal soap, and/or encourage predators like ladybugs and lacewings.



WHITEFLIES

Damage: They swarm when plants are disturbed and weaken plants by feeding.

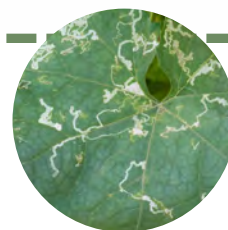
Solution: Use yellow sticky traps, neem oil spray in early morning, and remove heavily infested leaves.



LEAF MINERS

Damage: They create winding tunnels in leafy green foliage.

Solution: Use row covers on young plants, remove affected leaves, and consider adding beneficial nematodes in soil.



DISEASE PREVENTION

GOOD AIR CIRCULATION: Ensure plants have adequate spacing for Zone 11's humidity.

SOIL-LEVEL WATERING: Use drip irrigation or soaker hoses to avoid wetting foliage.

GARDEN SANITATION: Remove any diseased plant debris immediately.



Create a low-maintenance garden with this ancient “buddy system.”

COMPANION PLANTING PLANS

Done-for-You Garden Blueprints!



Includes 10 themed plans—complete with beneficial pairings, proper spacing, and more!

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