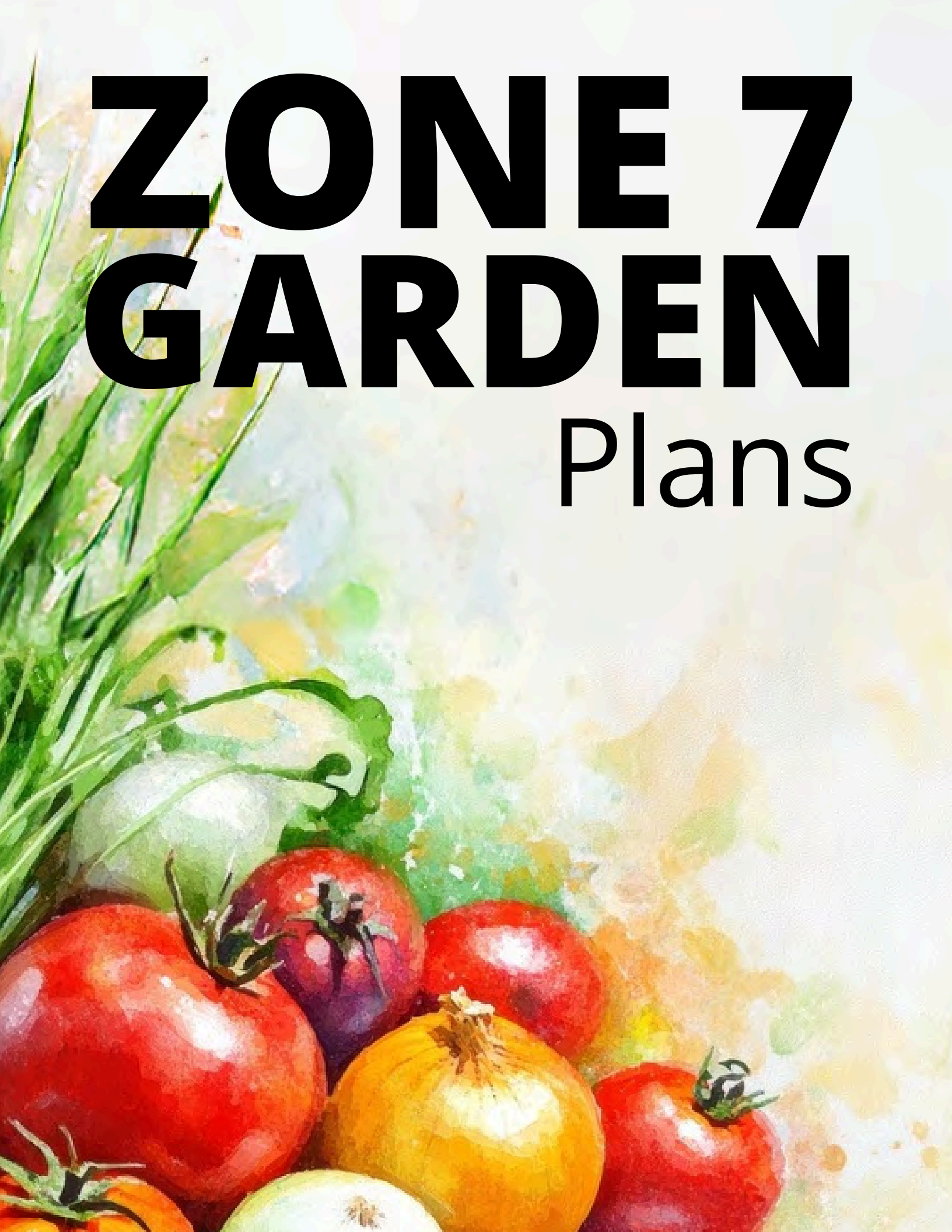


ZONE 7

GARDEN

Plans



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Homestead Academy of Practical Skills ROADMAP

Stay tuned! We have more resources in our publishing pipeline!



... and more!

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ZONE 7

Garden Plans

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ZONE 7 GARDEN

Plans

SAMPLE

Contents

Welcome to Food Prep Guide	7
Understanding Zone 7.....	8
How to Use This Guide	10
Monthly Action Plans	11
Sample Layouts	48
Reference Charts	52
Staples Garden Plan	53
Seed Starting Yearly Overview	56
Companion Planting Chart	60
Video Tutorials	66

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 7's unique conditions in mind: the mild winters, the hot and humid summers, and the long fall harvest window that sets this zone apart.



—*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 7

If you're new to gardening in Zone 7, you're working with one of the most generous climates in the United States. Your growing season is long, your winters are mild enough to keep hardy crops in the ground, and you have a true second growing season in the fall that gardeners in colder zones can only dream about.

Zone 7 is defined by its average minimum winter temperatures, which range from 0°F to 10°F. These relatively mild winters mean your growing season runs roughly 200 or more days between the last spring frost and first fall frost. This long window gives you time to grow not just one full garden of warm-season crops, but a substantial fall garden of cool-season vegetables as well.

The climate offers real advantages. Cool-season crops like lettuce, spinach, peas, and brassicas thrive in Zone 7's spring and fall, often producing abundantly before heat sets in.

Summer brings plenty of heat to grow warm-season favorites like tomatoes, peppers, corn, squash, okra, and sweet potatoes. Zone 7 summers are warm and humid, which suits heat-loving crops well. However, the intense summer heat does mean some cool-season crops will bolt or fail mid-summer—planning around this is part of gardening in this zone.

Zone 7a vs. Zone 7b

Zone 7a is defined by minimum winter temperatures of 0°F to 5°F. Zone 7b has minimum temperatures that range from 5°F to 10°F.

This five-degree difference translates into approximately 1-2 weeks' disparity in spring planting times. Zone 7a gardeners will typically wait until mid-April before safely planting warm-season crops like tomatoes, peppers, and squash outdoors. Zone 7b gardeners can often plant these same crops in early April or even late March in favorable years.

Zone 7a's last spring frost typically occurs in early to mid-April. Zone 7b gardeners often see their last frost in the first week of April or earlier. First fall frost arrives in late October for most of Zone 7, giving both subzones long and productive growing seasons.



Challenges in the Zone 7 Garden

Despite its advantages, Zone 7 presents specific challenges that require adaptation:

- Summer heat and humidity can be intense. Temperatures regularly climb into the 90s, and high humidity creates ideal conditions for fungal diseases like powdery mildew, blight, and leaf spot. Good air circulation, proper spacing, and avoiding overhead watering go a long way toward keeping plants healthy.
- Cool-season crops have a narrow spring window. Spring can shift from pleasant to hot quickly in Zone 7, shortening the time lettuce, spinach, and peas will produce before bolting. Starting seeds early and choosing bolt-resistant varieties helps, but expect a shorter spring harvest than gardeners in cooler zones enjoy.
- Winter is mild but not frost-free. Occasional hard freezes do occur, and a late cold snap can catch unprotected plants off guard. Keep row cover on hand through April, and don't plant tender crops based on a warm stretch alone.

A Note About Planting Times

Within these plans, we will estimate the best time to plant each item. However, weather is unpredictable.

Ultimately, your last frost date in spring and your first frost date in fall should dictate your planting dates.



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 within Zone 7's 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: January is planning month. While the garden is mostly dormant, a few cold-hardy crops may still be hanging on outdoors, and seed catalogs are arriving fast. Use this month to get organized, place seed orders, and set up your seed-starting space.

WEATHER WATCH: Average temperature 30-45°F | Frost likely | Occasional hard freezes possible | Ground may freeze briefly but rarely stays frozen long



PRIORITY TASKS

WEEK 1: Assess & Organize

- Inventory your seeds
- Toss anything more than 4-5 years old (or do a germination test)
- Order seeds
- Clean and sharpen garden tools while you have the time

WEEK 2: Plan & Order

- Sketch out your garden plan
- Order seeds
- You need intermediate-day or short-day onion varieties—confirm before ordering
- Research any new crops you want to try

WEEK 3: Prep for Seed-Starting

- Note important dates in this guide on your primary calendar
- Pre-order live plants and bulbs
- Gather seed-starting supplies: trays, grow lights, heat mats, seed-starting mix
- Order any supplies you need

WEEK 4: Start the First Seeds

- Start celery, rosemary, and lavender indoors
- Start onion seeds indoors by the end of the month
- Record seed-starting dates in a journal
- Check that grow lights and heat mats are working



PLANTING GUIDE

INDOOR SEED STARTING

CROP	START DATE	NOTES
Celery	January 12-26	Very slow to germinate; needs consistent warmth and moisture.
Rosemary	January 12-26	Slow germinator; bottom heat helps. Be patient—can take 2-3 weeks to sprout.
Lavender	January 26-February 9	Start early for strong transplants. Needs warmth to germinate well.
Onions (from seed)	January 26-February 9	Intermediate-day or short-day varieties only. Sow in flats; trim tops if they flop. Needs 10-12 weeks indoors.



COLD STRATIFICATION

Some perennial seeds need a cold period to germinate.

January is perfect for starting this process.

Perennials that need a cold period include:

- **Native wildflowers**
- **Perennial herbs**
- **Fruit trees and shrubs**

Place seeds in moist sand or peat moss in a sealed bag. Refrigerate for 4-12 weeks (check seed packet for specific timing).



SEED RECOMMENDATIONS

ONIONS

Zone 7 gardeners need intermediate-day or short-day onion varieties. Good choices include Texas Super Sweet, Red Creole, or Candy onions. If you'd rather buy onion starts, I highly recommend Dixondale Farms!



UTAH TALL CELERY

A classic, reliable variety (100-120 days) that produces thick, dark green stalks—one of the most widely grown celery varieties and a solid choice for Zone 7 gardeners starting it early indoors.



"ARP" ROSEMARY

A cold-hardy variety that holds up through Zone 7 winters better than most rosemary. Arp is known for its strong, clean flavor and upright growth habit.



PERENNIAL MAINTENANCE

Check mulch coverage on perennial beds to see if frost heaving has exposed crowns. If it has, add more mulch.

Frost heaving occurs when repeated freeze-thaw cycles in the soil literally push plants up and out of the ground. It is especially problematic for shallow-rooted perennials like strawberries and newly planted perennials that haven't established deep roots yet. Zone 7's fluctuating winter temperatures make this a common issue.



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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