



# Activity: Paper Towel Gardening



## Supplies

- Paper Towels (about 1 square foot per participant)
- Seeds
- Glue
- Markers
- Masking tape
- Planting Charts (printable chart on next page)

## Objective

The Paper Towel Activity is part of the Special Garden Project. Meant to help kick start the project, the objective of this activity is to show participants how to organize/ lay out their gardens in seed mats and transplant templates. The activity will take about 30-40 minutes.

## What to do

1. Team up the gardeners (students), and give two paper towels to each pair
2. Help them choose two plants to grow from their planting charts. Encourage them to choose one plant started by seed and one plant started by transplant. They will use the paper towels as spacing and layout guides when they plant in the garden.
3. Have the partners write their names, their plant's name, and the word *short*, *medium*, or *tall* to describe the plant's height on each towel.
4. Tell them they will plant their seed in a minigarden the size of the paper towel, and ask them how many plants can grow in that little space.
5. Ask the gardeners why they cannot grow many plants in a small space. What problems might the plants have?
6. Have the gardeners locate their vegetable in the provided Planting Chart (next page).
7. Determine how many plants can be grown in a space the size of a single paper towel.
8. Fold paper towel according to planting chart.
9. Glue seeds or create a mark in the center of each square on the paper towel.
10. Gardeners will take the paper towels home and plant their seeds!



## Tips & Notes

1. If the chart shows one seed per towel, the gardeners should paste a single seed (or make a mark) in the very center of the towel. If the chart shows four seeds per towel, the gardeners should fold their towels in quarters to make four equal sections. A seed can then be pasted in the middle of each of the four sections. If a plant calls for nine seeds per towel, the gardeners should fold the paper towel into thirds and then into thirds again, and paste a seed into the middle of each of the nine sections.
2. Explain that some seeds don't germinate on their own. It is a good idea to glue 1 or 2 extra seeds in each spot. If all the seeds do come up, all but one can be picked away. Explain that this is called THINNING. In this way we choose the strongest-looking plant to keep growing. When the gardeners remove the extra plants, have them pinch off each seedling at the base so the roots of the others aren't disturbed when pulling the plant out. Some plants such as squash grow large enough to require four squares, or towels, of space. Gardeners who choose crops that need this much space should tape four towels together to make a larger square and then paste the seed in the center.
3. It is a good idea to use a paper tape, such as masking tape, and not glue the seed directly over the tape. If the garden space is small, you may need to limit the number of gardeners who choose plants requiring four paper towels.
4. *Note: Seeds and transplants: If the gardeners are planting seeds, they can glue them directly to the paper towel. If they are planting transplants, they can use the paper towel as a template and mark a spot or cut a hole in the towel to show them where to plant when they are in the garden later.*

## Reflect

What was a success about your paper towel garden?

What could you have done differently with the layout of your seeds?

## Apply

What did you learn about how to plant different seeds? How could you apply what you learned to your own garden at home?

With this new garden plan, plant your seeds in your own garden and watch them grow!



Learn to Grow, and go to the FAIR!

# Planting Chart

Crop	Best Planting Season	Number of seeds per Paper Towel	Planting Depth	Days to Harvest	Country of Origin
<b>Root Crops</b>					
Beets	Spring or Late Summer	9	½ inch	55 to 70	Mediterranean Area
Carrots	Spring	16	¼ inch	70 to 80	Afghanistan
◆Garlic	Spring or Fall	16	1 inch	100 to 200	Pakistan
◆Onions	Spring	16	1 inch	80 to 120	Pakistan
◆Potatoes	Spring or Fall	1	4 inches	70 to 90	Chile and Peru
Radishes	Spring	16	½ inch	24 to 40	China and Asia
Turnips	Spring or Fall	9	½ inch	30 to 60	Mediterranean area
<b>Leaf Crops</b>					
Brussels sprouts	Spring or Early Summer	1	¼ or T	120 to 150	Mediterranean area
Cabbage	May to Jul	1	¼ or T	60 to 120	Mediterranean area
Chard	Mar to May	4	1 inch	45 to 80	Mediterranean area
Collards	Early Spring	4	½ inch	45 to 80	Mediterranean area
Kohlrabi	Early Spring	1	½ inch	45 to 80	Mediterranean area
Lettuce (leaf)	Spring	4	¼ or T	45 to 60	Egypt or Iran
Lettuce (head)	Spring	4	¼ or T	40 to 90	Egypt or Iran
Mustard Greens	Spring	4	½ inch	30 to 50	Mediterranean area
Parsley	Early Spring	4	T	20 to 120	Mediterranean area
Spinach	Spring or Fall	9	½ inch	40 to 60	Iran
Turnip Greens	Spring or Fall	4	½ inch	30 to 60	Mediterranean area
<b>Flower/Fruit Crops</b>					
Beans (bush)	Spring	4	1 inch	45 to 60	Mexico, SW U.S.
Beans (pole)	Spring	4	1 inch	50 to 70	Mexico, SW U.S.
Broccoli	Spring or Fall	1	¼ or T	60 to 80	Mediterranean area
Cauliflower	Spring or Fall	1	¼ or T	60 to 100	Mediterranean area
Cucumbers	Spring or Sum	2	1 inch	50 to 70	India
Squash	Summer	1 per 4 squares	1 inch	45 to 90	Mexico, SW U.S.
Tomatoes	Spring	1	¼ or T	60 to 80	Andes Mountain in South America

---

# Planting Tips



## When to Plant

The best time to plant vegetables is based on the weather. Plant crops that are susceptible to cold early enough in the fall so that they mature before the first freezing weather.\* Cold-hardy crops, which can withstand all but the coldest of weather conditions, are usually planted much later.

\* The recommended planting dates can vary greatly depending on where you live. [Contact your County Extension Office](#) for information to complete your Fall Planting Chart.

## Frost

If a frost occurs earlier than the average date, some of the less frost-tolerant plants may be damaged, and some of the harvest may be lost. You can minimize this problem by preventing heat from escaping by covering the garden with a light blanket, a clear plastic shower curtain or a row cover that you can buy.

## Special Consideration Crops

- ◆ **Garlic** is grown by dividing a head into individual cloves and planting each one.
- ◆ **Onions** can be grown by seed; however, they are usually planted as “sets,” or small onions, in late fall to early winter.
- ◆ **Potatoes** are grown by planting “seed” potatoes, which are sections of large potatoes that have been cut into chunks including an “eye,” or node. The new growth will emerge from these nodes.

## Transplants

### T - indicates transplants

Transplants can be grown by either seed or transplant—you may want to do both. Tomatoes are not included in the seed list. They should be grown from transplants in the spring, unless you start them from seed in midsummer. Plant transplants so that the root ball is completely covered with a soil layer no more than 1/4-inch thick. If the root ball is left exposed, it may wick water into the air away from the plant, and the plant may dry out and die.