

Taking time in spring to build fertility and loosen soil will set the garden up for a more productive year. First, a few weeks before you plan to plant, work in any cover crops and then blanket your garden bed with at least a half-inch layer of good compost — a full inch would be even better!

Focus on cultivating your soil. Pounding rain, gravity and other forces can cause soil to become compacted over time, so loosening it before planting should be a priority. If you plan to plant in a young bed that you need to cultivate in order to remove rocks or roots, use a shovel or digging fork to turn the soil when it's dry and crumbly (never when it's wet and clumpy, or you'll be stuck with big, brick-like clods).

Finally, apply an *organic* fertilizer to the degree that matches the needs of the crops you plan to plant. Light feeders with shallow roots, such as lettuce, will be fine with a small amount of organic fertilizer raked into the top few inches of soil. But for widely spaced plants that have big nutrient appetites, such as cabbage, broccoli, tomatoes and peppers, you should enrich individual planting holes with a mixture of compost and organic fertilizer just before you set out seedlings. As you complete the final step, try free grass clippings or one of the other low-cost organic fertilizer options!

### SPRING CLEAN UP SUGGESTIO STEPS TO PREP:

#### 1. Clear your garden of dead leaves and weeds

This is typically done during fall clean up, however, residual leaves may be present. Flowers and other plants prefer a tidy place to grow in, so make sure you have a tidy plot of soil for them. If you have perennial plants, cut back the dead growth. Dig up around 2.5 to 3 inches of organic matter (i.e. compost, etc.) and dispose.

#### 2. Plan ahead for summer-flowering/harvesting plants

To make sure you get beautiful, blooming plants and a colorful display in the summertime, start planting them in early spring. Ensure you brush up on your cultivation and harvest times in order to have a productive garden all summer long and not a single harvest time with a large bounty of vegetables. This ensures less waste and fresher veggies when eaten!

#### 3. Remove any unwanted pests

In order to ensure a productive and healthy garden; get rid of any hibernating pests such as aphids, slugs, and snails now so that they don't even have the opportunity to get at your plants. One bug to look for in particular is the white vine weevil larvae (pictured below). They live in the compost and will, without a doubt, feed on plant roots.



#### 4. Look for a variety of ways to get your seeds, and plant a variety of seeds

Ask a neighbour for old seedlings, check out seeds you've never planted before at hardware stores, or get cuttings from a friend. Additionally, Orillia is home to several seed libraries in which people may pick up or drop off any seeds of their choosing! The possibilities are endless! But be sure to read up on what kind of plants you're getting in your garden; some plants do not play nice with others, and will take up an entire plot. Plan your garden plot on paper so you know exactly where everything will grow.

#### 5. Don't get ahead of yourself!

Be patient. Don't rush your plants, and try to give them an easy transition. Take your seedlings outside and continue to water them in their trays for a week or two. Eventually, they'll acclimate to the outdoor environment. If you are beginning your seedlings outside, ensure they aren't planted until the threat of the last frost occurs! Frost may destroy germinating seedlings and you will have to begin again.

Below are some suggestions and time frames of fruits and vegetables that work well within Southern Ontario to help you get started. In addition to these, it would be wise to consider planting some natural pest deterrents such as basil (repels flies), chrysanthemums (repels beetles, ticks and roaches), clovers (repels aphids and wireworms), as well as crown imperial (to repel rabbits, mice, moles and squirrels)

We look forward to seeing you in the 2018 season!

Vegetables	Indoor seeding	Outdoor	Outdoor	Seeds per
		seeding	transplanting	gram
Beans (yellow or green)		Late May- Late June		-
Beets		Mid-May		50
Broccoli	Mid-April		May	300
Brussel Sprouts	Mid April		Mid to late May	300
Cabbage	Mid-April		May	300-500
Cabbage (Chinese)		Early July		300
Carrots		Mid-May		700
Cauliflower	Mid-April		Late May	300
Celeriac	Mid-March		Mid to late May	2 500
Celery	Mid-March		Mid to late May	2 500
Chard	Mid-April	Mid-May	Mid-May	50
Chicory		Early July		600
Chives	March	Mid-May	Early May	300-500
Corn		Mid-May		-
Cucumber	Early May	Late May	Early June	35
Eggplant	Late March		Early June	150
Garlic			October or early May	-
Ground Cherry	Late March		Early June	300
Kohirabi	Mid-May			500
Leeks	Early March		Early May	400
Lettuce (Head)	Mid-April		Late May	800
Lettuce (Leaf)	Mid-April	Early May	Late May	800
Muskmelon	Mid to late April		Early June	35
Onions	Early March	Early May (tie in bunches)	Early May	250
Parsley	Early March	Early May	Early May	600
Parnsnip		Mid-May		220
Peas		Mid-May		2-6
Peppers	Late March		Early June	150
Potatoes		Mid-May		-
Pumkin	Early May	Mid-May	Early June	4
Radishes		May-June		120
Rutabaga		Mid-May		300
Salsify	Mid-May			100
Shallots (Autumn)			Late August	-
Shallots (Spring)			Early May	-
Spinach		Mid-May		90
Tomatoes	Late March - Mid April		Early June	300-400
Turnips		Mid-May		400-750
Watermelon	Mid to Late May		Early June	20