



Small Fruit and Vegetable Production



Session 4 Vegetable Growing Seasons in Georgia

Timothy Coolong PhD
Commercial Vegetable Extension Specialist
University of Georgia, Tifton Campus



Georgia Growing Seasons



- Georgia can be divided into 3 growing regions
 - Mountains (Rome, Rabun, Blairsville)
 - Piedmont (Athens, Atlanta)
 - Coastal Plain (S. GA, Tifton)



Georgia Growing Seasons

- In the Mountains and Piedmont frost protection provides clear advantages for markets
- In S. GA year-round production of vegetables occurs

• First/Last Frost Dates

Location	First Frost	Last Frost
Blairsville	9/23-11/6	3/31-5/21
Watkinsville	10/9-11/25	3/5-4/19
Tifton	11/1-12/21	1/26-3/21

Dates gathered from data from 1994-2015 time period



Warm and cool season crops

- Many warm season crops are fruiting crops (pepper, cucumber, tomato)
- Many cool season crops the leaves are consumed (cabbage, greens, lettuce)
 - There are exceptions – bulbs and root crops (beets) are cool season
 - Some root crops (sweet potato) are warm season
- While you can grow crops out of season expect to encounter more problems under less than optimal conditions
- Season extension techniques

Cool Season Crops

- The following crops will tolerate frosts and freezes
 - Onion (15-18 °F)
 - Cabbage (20-22 °F)
 - Greens, Spinach (18-24 °F)
 - Broccoli/Cauliflower (24-30 °F)
 - Carrot (22-24 °F)
 - Lettuce (24-28 °F)
- Freeze/frost tolerance is related to species as well as
 - Growing conditions
 - Stage of growth



Damage to mustard greens after cultivation and cold weather

Warm Season crops

- All of these crops will be damaged by frost
 - Solanaceous crops (tomato, pepper, eggplant)
 - Cucurbits (cucumber, watermelon, cantaloupe, squash)
 - Sweet corn
 - Beans, Peas
 - Okra, sweetpotato



Lettuce bolting

Days to maturity

- Days to maturity are an estimate only
 - Ex. Sweet corn in spring and fall can differ by 20 days in maturity
 - Think in terms of heat units
 - Most warm season crops use a base temperature of 50 °F for growth
- Days to maturity cont.
 - Differ based on a direct seeded or transplanted crop
 - Beans are 50-55 days from seeding to maturity
 - Peppers may be 70-75 days from transplanting (6 week old transplant)

Growing seasons

- N. GA Mountains
 - 1 warm season crop
 - 1-2 cool season crops
 - Planting warm season May 1 (estimate)
 - Cool season crops planted March and August
- Piedmont
 - 1 or 2 warm season crops (2 short season crops such as squash/cucumber)
 - 2 cool season crops
 - Plant warm season early-mid April and early August
 - Cool season March and August

Growing season

- S. GA
 - 2 warm season crops
 - 2 cool season crops
 - Warm season planted late Feb-late March and Aug 1-Aug 15
 - Cool season planted mid Jan-early Feb and Aug 15-Sept 15
- In the southern part of the state the second warm season crop will be under severe disease and insect pressure
 - Disease resistance in varieties is critical

Transplant production

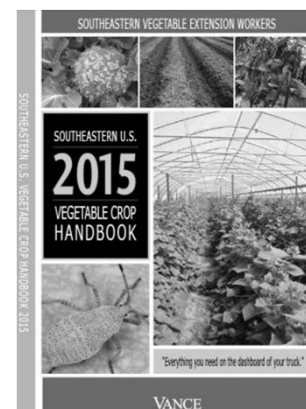
- For many fall crops transplant production can be challenging
 - Seeded and grown during the hottest time of the year
 - Germination rates of cool season crops suffer in heat
- Direct seeded fall crops (carrot, bean) need to have constant wetting of the soil to prevent crusting and improve germination.



Photo: Tim Coolong

Additional Resources

- General planting dates for GA
 - Vegetable gardening in GA
 - <http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C963>
 - SE Regional Vegetable Production Guide
 - <http://www.thepacker.com/grower/2015-southeastern-us-vegetable-crop-handbook>





Supported by

 **USDA** Beginning Farmer Rancher
Development Program
 **NIFA** Developing the Next Generation
of Sustainable Farmers in Georgia Grant

