

# Growing Tips for Washington County

Southern Utah has a rich agricultural history and is known for growing a wide variety of crops, and some that are only grown in the Saint George area when compared to the rest of Utah. That being said, we live in an extreme environment, and there are some tips and tricks that will help you be more successful in your gardening endeavors. Here are some that we have observed from successful gardeners in our area:

## Tip 1: Climate & Frost Dates

- Washington County covers a wide range of elevations, so planting dates vary by town. In St. George (2,624 ft), the average last frost is March 30 and the first frost is November 1 – over 200 frost-free days.
- In higher elevation towns (Enterprise, Veyo, New Harmony), frost comes later in spring and earlier in fall, shortening the season.
- Plant based on average frost dates for your specific area.

## Tip 2: Cool-Season Vegetables

- Cold-hardy crops (spinach, kale, peas, onions, cabbage) can be planted before the last frost.
- Root crops (carrots, beets, radish, potatoes) can also be started early, though young seedlings may be damaged if a hard freeze occurs.
- These crops should mature before summer heat, as most decline once temps hit the 90s.

## Tip 3: Warm-Season Vegetables

Tomatoes, peppers, squash, melons, and beans must wait until after the last frost.

- In Washington and Hurricane valleys, this is usually early April.
- June through August often brings 95–115°F days that can sterilize pollen and prevent fruit set (especially in tomatoes and squash). To get around this problem, plant tomatoes as early as possible after frost danger has passed to ensure harvest before extreme summer heat sets in.

## Tip 4: Dealing with Summer Heat

Think of gardening here as two seasons:

1. Early spring plantings that mature before summer heat.
2. Late summer plantings that produce in the cooler fall months.

## Tip 5: Other helpful practices:

- Use transplants (tomatoes, peppers, melons, broccoli, cauliflower) to get a jump on the season.
- Shade & Sun Protection
  - Afternoon heat stress is a major challenge.
  - 50% shade cloth is highly recommended for tomatoes, peppers, and melons to prevent sunburn and extend productivity.
  - Where possible, give plants protection from the west sun during late afternoon.

For detailed planting calendars by town, visit:

[extension.usu.edu/washington/gardening](https://extension.usu.edu/washington/gardening)

