



Harden off Your Seedlings

Frost Free Date: ~ April 20 (Chicago)

GPCA's seedlings were grown in a temperature controlled greenhouse. To prepare your seedlings for your garden, we suggest hardening them off, so they can adjust to the sun, wind and temperature changes. When in doubt, feel free to cover or bring in the seedlings to protect them from potential frost or really windy days.



Day 1

This first day, you'll want to bring your seedlings outside into a shaded spot to start getting used to the wind and temps. If possible, move outside for 1-2 hours in the warmest part of the day into a semi-protected area or next to a warm building wall.

Day 2-3

This next stage, the seedlings can stay outside a bit longer, adding 1 hour each day. Keep them in a partially shaded spot helps them adjust to the sun.

Days 4-6

Once the seedlings have built up to 5-6 hours outside, they can start moving to a more direct sun spot. A spot that starts in shade and turns to sun or full sun is ideal but not necessary.

Days 7-9

At this point, your seedlings are likely ready to be planted. Depending on the weather, keep bringing them in at night if temps dip lower than 40.

Day 10

(QR code to check your frost dates)

At this point, your seedlings should be ready to be planted! Seedlings should be good to go so long as overnight temps don't go below 40 F (cool season crops will be fine with below freezing).

Unexpected Freeze

Spring weather is unpredictable! If you need to protect your seedlings from freezing, cover the seedlings. Light weight fabric, clear plastic bins or rinsed out milk jugs can be used to protect the seedlings from the over night freeze.

