

FEBRUARY 2026

GARDENING TO DO'S

Even though winter is still holding on, February is the perfect time for gardeners in Southeast Michigan to get a jump on the growing season. Starting seeds indoors now gives plants the long head start they need for a successful harvest in our Zone 6b growing season.

What Seeds Can We Start Indoors?

Start Now (Jan -Early Feb)

- Onions & Leeks- Need 10-12 weeks before the last frost.
- Cabbage, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Brussels Sprouts & Kale - Start 6-8 weeks before the last frost (late January-early February).
- Celery -Requires 8-10 weeks and steady moisture to germinate.
- Head Lettuce- Start 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late January-February).
- Herbs- Parsley, oregano, thyme, and chives can be started now (some sources recommend late January-February).

Start Next (Feb-Mar)

- Peas-Can be started indoors about 100 days before the last frost and transplanted outdoors early.
- Peppers & Eggplant -Start in early to mid-February.
- Tomatoes- Often best started in February or March, depending on the variety.

Growing Herbs for Tea

February is also a great time to begin planning (and even starting) herbs that can be enjoyed as soothing, homegrown teas.



Herbs Commonly Used for Tea:

- Chamomile
- Lavender
- Lemon Balm
- Mint
- Thyme
- Oregano
- Lemongrass
- Calendula
- Ginger leaves
- Sage
- Rosemary
- Basil

Fresh vs. Dried Herbs for Tea

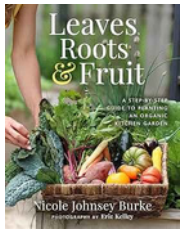
- Fresh herbs often have a brighter, sweeter flavor than dried ones, especially lemon balm, mint, and chamomile. Use fresh herbs when you can, and dry extras to enjoy later.
- For one cup of herbal tea, start with 1 tablespoon fresh herbs or 1 teaspoon dried per 8 ounces of hot water. Steep 5-10 minutes, tasting and adjusting as needed.



Seed Library Update



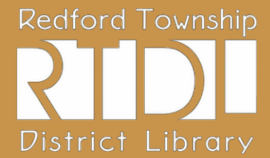
Good news! The Seed Library has been restocked for the season, with a variety of vegetables, herbs, and flowers ready for planting. Reminder: Seed saving at the end of the growing season helps keep the Seed Library stocked and sustainable. By saving and returning seeds from your healthiest plants, you help support future gardeners in our community.



Book Recommendation: Leaves, Roots & Fruit: A Step-By-Step Guide to Planting an Organic Kitchen Garden by Nicole Johnsey Burke

This practical and inspiring guide to organic kitchen gardening helps growers of all levels produce more of what they eat, no matter the size of their space.

For more information on our Seed Library, please visit rtdl.org/seed-library



FEBRUARY RECIPE

The one state, one seed selection this year is 'Pacific Beauty' Calendula! “Pacific Beauty' Calendula is a lovely flower in shades of yellow, gold, and orange and it grows well in cool weather. Not only is it a beautiful flower, the plant is also a healing herb”

Citrus and Calendula tea

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup dried calendula flowers
- 1/2 cup honey
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint (optional)
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 star anise
- 2 oranges
- 1 large grapefruit
- 4 cups water (divided)



Directions

1. In a saucepan, add the dried flowers, honey, mint, cinnamon stick, star anise, zest from the oranges and grapefruit and 1 cup water. Let this come to a boil and reduce to simmer for about 10 minutes. Stir occasionally.
2. Strain into a large, heat-proof pitcher and add 1 cup citrus juice (about 2 oranges and 1 large grapefruit).
3. Add in 3 cups of boiling water.
4. Garnish with extra star anise or cinnamon sticks.

