



Spring Edition

# Grow Eat Learn Digest

## Return of Hummingbirds

Crossing the Gulf of Mexico, from Central America to Canada— that is the incredible spring migration route of Militaw (Mi'kmaq), or the Ruby Throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*)!

Starting in early May, we will begin to see the arrival of male hummingbirds in Mi'kma'ki, who fiercely stake out their territory. Female hummingbirds arrive a couple of weeks later, and begin to build their nests. Females lay two, pea-sized eggs, which hatch in about two weeks time. Mother hummers raise their babies on a diet of flower nectar and small insects.

## The Garden of Militaw (mi-li-daaw)

You can plant a native flower garden for Militaw. Hummingbirds are especially attracted to red, purple/mauve and pinkish flowers, but will visit flowers such as Evening Primrose too. Hummingbirds prefer tubular flowers to sip their nectar from. Some of their favourite flowers are: Canada lily, cardinal flower, wild bergamot or bee balm, and the northern blue flag iris. Hummingbirds consume two to three times their body weight in nectar each day! Hummingbirds are important pollinators and considered a keystone species.



Photo credit: Kathleen F Spicer

### Feeder Care

Clean your humming bird it often with hot water and unscented dish soap. This helps prevent hummers getting sick.



### Hummingbird Syrup Recipe

- 1 cup sugar
  - 4 cups water
1. Boil together briefly
  2. Let cool before using

### Tracking

Track the migration of Ruby Throated Hummingbirds using this online map.



This quarterly newspaper is developed by Nourish Nova Scotia's Grow Eat Learn program team. In the digest we share tips about gardening and food, stories from schools and youth, and upcoming garden events!

[www.nourishns.ca/grow-eat-learn](http://www.nourishns.ca/grow-eat-learn)

# Salsa Garden Growing Calendar

Understand the timeline of actions required to grow from seed to salsa! Read Notes for tips on plant care and things to look for each month.

Download this free [Growing Calendar](#) template



## February

**Start seeds:** It's almost time, but for now just dream.

**Notes:** Start planning & mapping out your salsa garden. Start to source your seeds. Research local "last frost date".



## March

**Seed:** Onions.

**Notes:** Start onions indoors under lights (or buy "sets"). Record "days to maturity" from seed pack to plan harvest.



## April

**Seed:** Tomato, sweet pepper, chili pepper.



**Harvest:** Not yet, keep going

**Notes:** A few different colours & sizes of tomato varieties can be fun! Start both sweet (like bell) and hot (like jalapeno) peppers.



## May

**Plant:** Onions in ground.

**Pot up:** Tomatoes & peppers.

**Harvest:** It will be a while...

**Notes:** After transplanting, mulch onion seedlings or sets well using straw or leafy garden waste.

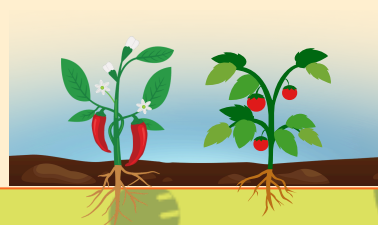


## June

**Plant:** Tomatoes, peppers in ground.

**Harvest:** Not yet, keep going!

**Notes:** Start hardening off seedlings in early June before transplanting into garden after the last frost.



## July

**Plant:** Just watering.

**Harvest:** Garlic scapes early in the month as they curl, before they flower, then harvest bulbs at the end.

**Notes:** Trim your tall, climbing tomato plants (indeterminate varieties)



## August

**Seed:** Cilantro



**Harvest:** Tomatoes & peppers

**Notes:** Cilantro takes 40-60 days to mature. Plant seeds on shady side of tomato plants.



## September

**Harvest:** Onions, peppers, tomatoes, cilantro

**Notes:** It's salsa-making time!



## October

**Plant:** Garlic cloves

**Harvest:** Onions, peppers, tomatoes, cilantro

**Notes:** Cloves planted and mulched will grow into bulbs. It's also a good time to put the garden to bed.

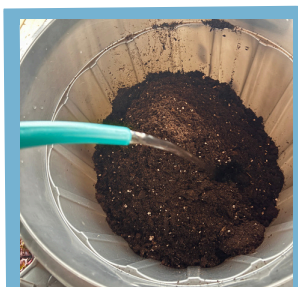


# Guide to starting seedlings



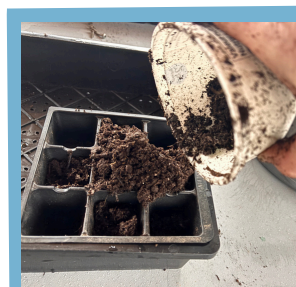
This visual guide demonstrates how to start seeds using seed trays or plant pots/containers of your choice and moistened soil.

## Step 1



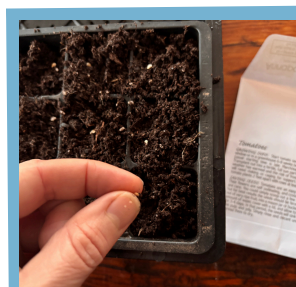
Add soil to container & mix in water.

## Step 2



Fill seed trays with moist soil.

## Step 3



Using info on seed packet, plant seeds.

## Step 4



Cover with soil and water well. Label.

## Step 5



Observe, water & care for seedlings.

## Step 6



Once sprouted, keep in sunny area.

*Developed by Bria Miller-Chiome & Raina McDonald, Garden Mentor*

Garden Lesson 2:  
Starting Seeds  
Indoors



Before You Get Started/  
To Consider:



Garden Lesson 1:  
Planning A Garden

## Materials:

- Seeds
- Potting soil
- Clear plastic covering (e.g., cling wrap, clear plastic bag, or plastic seed tray dome)
- Seed tray(s) to plant in
- Watering can
- Mixing container
- Popsicle sticks
- Permanent marker

## Optional:

- Spray bottle for watering
- Soil amendments, compost
- Small shovel for mixing soil
- Recycled containers (get creative with it!)

## Seedling Care Tips

- Check the soil every day by touching it. If it feels dry, add water until the soil is moistened all the way though but not soggy!
- Use a spray bottle at first to water evenly. Once seedlings sprout, try bottom-watering: pour water into a tray and let the soil soak it up through drainage holes in the bottom of your pot or cells.
- Cover your tray with plastic or a dome lid to keep moisture in. Lift the cover once a day to let fresh air in and prevent mold. A dome lid also helps keep rodents out!



## Peeking for Perennials

The garden and forest are waking up! Keep your eyes open for soft, fuzzy pussy willow buds near stream banks and ditches, the delicate white blossoms of serviceberry trees, and tiny spring ephemeral flowers carpeting the forest floor — here today and gone before summer arrives. In the garden, watch for rhubarb pushing its crinkled red and green shoots up through the soil, almost like it can't wait to get growing. These are some of the sweetest signs of the season in Nova Scotia/Mi'kma'ki, so head outside this week and see how many you can spot!

Check out the [Foraging with Kids in Mi'kma'ki](#) activity guide.



# Cabot Education Centre Story Share

Last September students at Cabot Education Centre, along with their teacher Naomi Stockley and a few parents, got together to plant an apple tree guild. They learned to place the different plants of the guild, according to their role in the food forest. With many hands and a lot of enthusiasm we had fun! Hopefully the plants are now waking up.



Apple Tree Guild:  
How-to Guide

"It was a great experience being outside in the school field and learning about plants, including how each one has unique characteristics and purposes. I am excited to see how our apple tree will grow in the future. It will be wonderful if we can someday pick apples from it, along with the blueberries we planted."

"We learned that we will need to plant another apple tree in the future so that our tree can produce fruit through cross-pollination"

"It was a lot of work to dig through the ground and remove the rocks, but I love the idea of taking care of plants and watching them grow"

"Being out in nature is peaceful and relaxing"

"We found many interesting insects and worms, and we were careful not to harm them because they are important to the ecosystem"



## Calling All: Youth, Students, Garden clubs, etc!

We'd love to share garden art and stories from Youth across Mi'kma'ki/NS in our final 2026 Summer Edition! Share your art or writing and receive seeds in the mail.

Now Accepting Art & Story Submissions!

