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April is the month of planting the spring garden. Onions go in first, and then potatoes. These are the two crops that the king's deer don't eat, so we don't have to plant them inside the deer fence. All other vegetables and fruits can be destroyed if unprotected.

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Once the ground loses its winter chill, the rest of the early garden goes in. we sow head lettuce's in long rows now for transplanting into beds in about a month. This years varieties include Avenue, Nevada, Magenta, Mottistone and Michelle, which are all Batavian or Summer Crisp lettuces. Crispins and Summertime are iceburg types, and Red Sails and Tropicana are Grand Rapid varieties. Buttercrunch is Bibb type lettuce and Winter Destiny and Jericho are Romaines.

French Breakfast is a long radish, and we are trying s new one called Purple Plum. For an experiment, I mixed radish and lettuce seed together, thinking I'll pull the radish in a month and let the lettuce grow out.

We grow a lot of Parsley. Forest Green and Italian Giant are the curly and flat leaf varieties, respectively. French Swiss Chard is our favorite, chard, although we are getting colorful with Ruby Red and Golden Sunrise.

The leeks are King Richard and the celery is Utah Tall. Arugula is a pungent herb, Sorrel a lemon-flavored leaf, and chives are like tiny green onions. Valerian and Chamomile are medicinal herbs sprouting in a cold frame.

I like the old timey carrots and beets. Scarlet Nantes is a sweet carrot, and Danver's Half long gets a little bigger. Both require a lot of hand work.

Detriot Dark Red is the standard beet, but we are also growing three other ones. Chioggia is a pretty, Italian heirloom with alternating red and white concentire circles when sliced crosswise.

Crosby beets are flatter, their diameter is larger than their height. For a golden beet we are trying Touchstone. We plant the beets in a 5 inch wide row, and then thin out the baby beet, first.

The pea patch has Oregen Snow Peas, and two English shell peas. One is Little Marvel, and the other is Freezonia. We don’t have much luck with peas, I think mice and voles eat the seed and the stand is poor.

All of the summer vegetables will have to wait. A frost is still possible in early May, and they are not hardy. But all of the spring garden plants can take frost and thrive in cooler weather. The rest of April is for composting and plowing the soil so we will be ready to plant in May.