

# Deciphering Seed Packets

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At the garden center, colorful seed packets promise a bountiful future. To succeed in your gardening efforts, it's essential to understand what to look for on these packets. Here are key factors to consider:

**Plant Name:** While common names may vary by region, the scientific name uniquely identifies each plant.

**Type:** Annuals complete their life cycle within a year, biennials last two seasons, and perennials return each season. Knowing this helps align your choices with your gardening goals.

**Mature Size:** This indicates how large the plant will be, essential for spacing and ensuring mature plants fit your garden.

**Light Needs:** Knowing whether a plant requires full sun, partial sun, or shade helps you select the right spot in the garden for healthy growth.

**Direct Sow vs. Start Indoors:** Some seeds can be planted directly in the ground, while others need to be started indoors and transplanted after the frost danger has passed.

**Planting Map:** A color-coded guide often shows the correct sowing times.

**Planting Depth:** Typically listed as a fraction of an inch, a general rule is to plant at a depth of 2-3 times the seed's diameter.

**Days to Emerge:** Understanding this range allows for better garden planning.

**Days to Bloom or Maturity:** This estimate indicates when the plant will bloom or reach maturity.

By considering these factors, you can feel more confident in your gardening journey.

## References:

University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

<https://ucanr.edu/site/uc-master-gardeners-placer-county/article/seed-packets-revealing-truth>

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<https://extensionpubs.unl.edu/publication/g1953/2009/html/view>

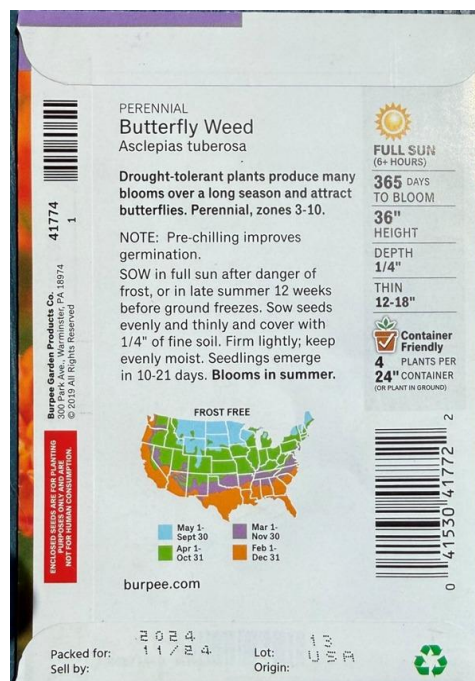


Photo by Gary Roemmich