

FROM SEED TO FEED

THE PLANTING AND HARVESTING OF CORN



Spring is a season of fresh beginnings, particularly on the farm. Corn farming entails multiple processes - from planting to growing to harvesting - to produce a secure, nutritious, and cost-effective crop that can be utilized for various purposes.



April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

Planting

Planting time can vary depending on the climate and the weather, but generally will begin in early to mid-April and will continue through mid to late May.

Pest Control and Fertilizing

Farmers inspect their fields for weed or insect problems before planting. To avoid insect infestation, they may treat their seeds with insecticides and may use herbicides to manage weed growth as the corn begins to grow. This helps the corn thrive by reducing competition for nutrients. Farmers may use nitrogen during planting and apply it again after the corn has emerged to ensure healthy growth.

Plant Emergence

The seed will germinate and emerge from the ground in approximately seven days (weather allowing).

Plant Growth

After the plant emerges, it goes through a period of growth, adding leaves and growing taller.

Pest Control

To help control weeds, farmers may apply post-planting herbicide once the corn has emerged but before it gets too tall.

Moisture

Corn needs adequate moisture during this time to help with growth and pollination.

Tasselling and Silking

During the reproductive stage, the tassel and silk will form and pollination will occur. Afterward, the kernels will begin to develop, and eventually, the grain will fill out.

Plant Maturity

Once the grain has filled, the plant and ear will reach maturity. The kernels will go from a soft dough phase to dent where all kernels have a dent. They will then reach the proper moisture level to be harvested.

Harvesting

Harvest time will vary based on the variety of the corn and its intended use. Some corn used for silage may be harvested towards the end of August, while corn planted for animal feed needs to “dry down” before being harvested. This corn can be harvested and placed in a dryer, or it can be left in the field until it reaches approximately 15% moisture.

Fall Fertilizer Application

Once the corn is harvested, a fall application of lime may be applied to the fields.

