

A New Year, A New Start - On our homestead so far for 2017, we have had 9 baby goats born, added 400 quail eggs to the incubator, acquired 4 new New Zealand meat rabbits (1 buck and 3 does), we stocked up on a months' worth of Quinoa, flax seeds, Himalayan salt and popping corn seeds. We have planted 60 6-pack planters full of medicinal herbs.

We are continuing our fodder for animal feed and also have meal worms growing for extra protein foods for our chickens.

What are some of the things that you can do to be better prepared for the new year?

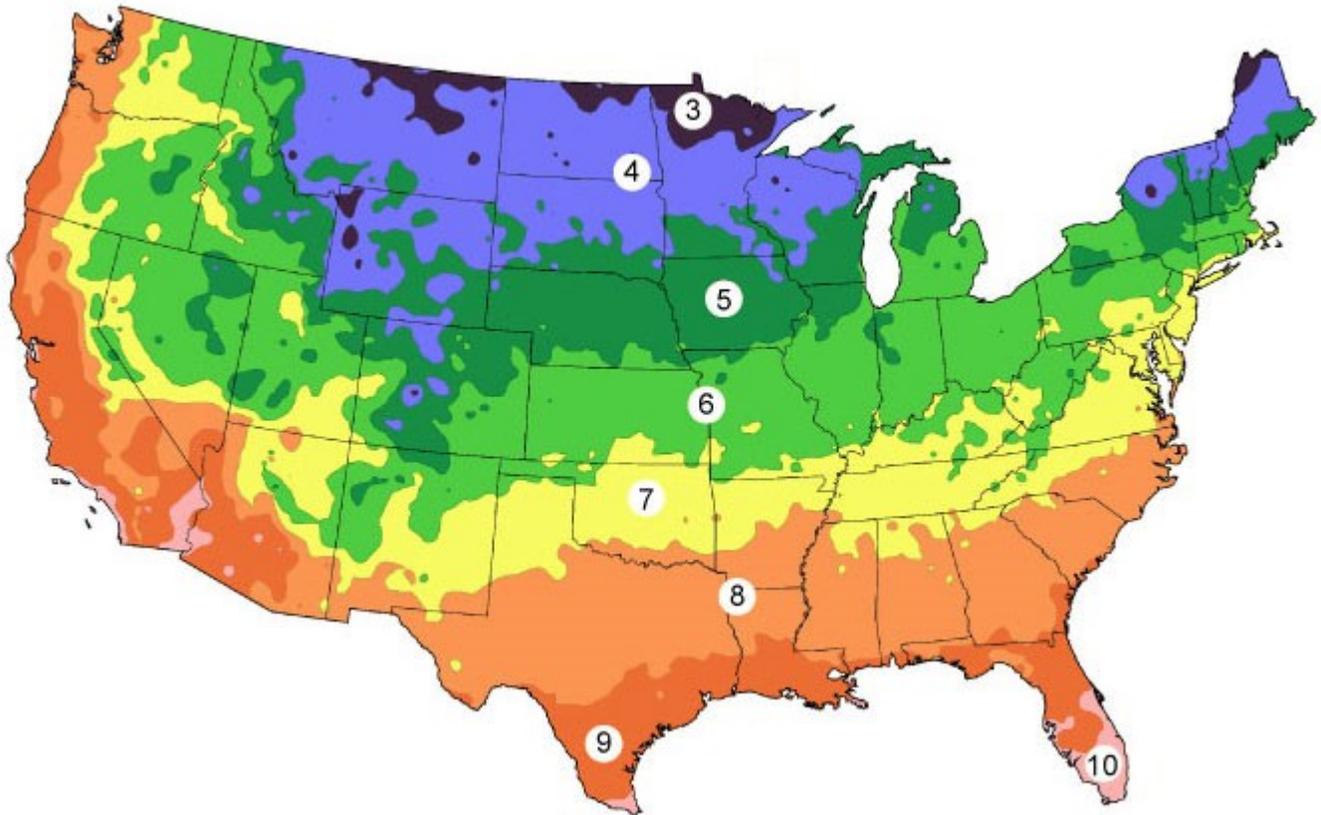
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. Raising Your Own Mealworms - <http://www.backyardchickens.com/t/30444/how-to-grow-your-own-mealworms-instructions>

1. Find a clear plastic container with approximately six-inch high sides. It may be the size of one to three square feet. For ventilation, drill about forty 1/4 inch holes in the lid. If condensation occurs, drill even more holes, or cover the container with a screen.
2. Put about three inches of one part chick starter (or laying mash) and one part wheat bran (optional) in the container. Mix well and level it. This is food for your newly hatched mealworms.
3. Cut an apple in half. Turn the round side down and push it down into the feed until flush with the feed and bran mixture. This is to give them moisture. If the skin of the apple is removed, the moisture in it will get into your feed and will spoil it. For this reason, do not peel your apples. Check your cultures every week to make sure they aren't out of apples.
4. Add thirty to forty mealworms per square foot of container. Get them from your friends, or you can find them in a farmer's feed building, usually under his feed bags. They can also be bought. Add four layers of unprinted paper such as the regular brown grocery bags. Put paper on top of the feed mixture, apple halves, and mealworms. Mealworms love to hide between the layers of paper. I record the date I start each culture on the top layer of paper.
5. Store such a started culture at room temperature, or warmer. These mealworms will each turn into a pupa, then the pupa will turn into a beetle. These beetles will mate, then lay their eggs between the paper and feed. After this, the beetles die. This is their complete life cycle. Soon, you'll see many tiny mealworms when you run your fingers through the top of the feed. They will produce up to 3,000 worms per square foot of container. This complete cycle will take only two to three months, if your culture is stored at, or slightly above, room temperature. Temperature plays a big role in the length of the beetle's life cycle. I start a new culture every month. This strategy keeps me in plenty of worms.
6. Replace the apples whenever they are completely eaten or half spoiled. After the young mealworms are seen, keep two halves, rather than only one half apple, per square foot of container. Keeping plenty of moisture (apples) available keeps the worms growing faster. Potatoes also work, but apples work better because they supply more moisture for the worms.
7. Put fully grown worms into another well-vented container with only some feed and a bit of apple. Store these in a cool place, or even in the refrigerator. This delays them from turning into pupae for up to six months. Set container out to room temperature for one day every week to allow the worms to feed.

Zone 7 - Vegetable Planting Calendar Guide

<http://www.ufseeds.com/Zone-7-Planting-Calendar.html>



Zone 7 has medium length growing season. Most vegetable varieties will have no problem maturing before your first frost date. With a last frost date of April 15th and first frost date of November 15th. These dates will vary a week or two so it's important to watch the weather before planting. Annual minimum temperature for zone 7 is 5°F.

Zone 7 Hardiness Dates

Last Frost Date	First Frost Date
April 15	November 15

Use your last and first frost dates to calculate your planting schedules.

Using the planting schedule below will help you get the most out of your garden. Starting seeds indoors before your last frost date will give you a jump start on the growing season. Knowing when to transplant seedlings outdoors will help to maximize your harvest.

[Shop Our Vegetable Seeds](#)

