



Corn & Soybean Planting Are You Ready?

May 5, 2026

The CCE and WAC Team have been out measuring soil temperatures to assess progress toward good planting conditions. We've had quite variable weather this spring with several very cold and frosty nights in the past few weeks. Rain has been seasonable, but not excessive so far.

We measured soil temperatures on April 28 and May 5 at multiple sites across Delaware County. The mornings were cool and sunny, and soil conditions were generally favorable, neither too wet nor too dry.

The chart below shows the soil temperature measured.

We suggest starting to plant when:

- **soil conditions are dry and suitable for good planter function**
- **soil temperature is above 50°**
- **and the 5-7-day forecast is for continued warm weather**

Seeds are vulnerable to cold shock in the initial germination process, so avoiding cold rain in the first few days after planting is advised.

This week's soil temperatures averaged 51°, reaching the minimum for planting. However, the 10-day forecast is for cool temperatures and some rain, so monitoring soil conditions will be important.

Plant Population

A good plant population is critical for optimum yield. Corn grain fields on loamy fields should shoot for a harvest population of 28,000 to 30,000 plants/acre, for silage bump to up to 32,000. On droughty/gravelly fields reduce by 2,000 or 3,000 plants per acre. These are recommendations for harvest population, you should plan on about 90% emergence, so dropping around 32,000 seeds per acre for grain, and about 35,000 for silage.

Planting Depth

For early planted corn and conditions with good moisture, a planting depth of 1½ to 2 inches is recommended. If planting later into dry soils corn can be planted 2 to 4 inches deep if necessary to plant into moist soil. Planting shallow (less than 1½ in) to hope for quick emergence is tempting, but shallow planting makes plants more susceptible to herbicide injury, pulling by crows, and reduces good rooting depth for the seedling.

Don't Out-Kick the Coverage

Choose hybrids that are appropriate for your farm's conditions and planting date. The past few years fall frosts have been later, but don't be fooled, those short days in Late September and Early October usually don't bring very many growing degree days. Not much corn ripening occurs, even though it's not getting killed by frost. We recommend choosing a hybrid that will get to at least half milk line by mid-September. This also improves likelihood of good harvest conditions and a good chance to get good cover crop establishment.

Stay Safe and enjoy the spring.

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Delaware County

Watershed Agricultural Council
nycwatershed.org



°F @ 2" Delaware County Soil Temperature 2026					
5-May	28-Apr	Town	Elevation	Aspect	Field Condition
50	-	Bovina	1960	Hillside -S	Corn Stubble
-	52	Davenport	1175	Valley Floor	Tilled
52	51	Davenport	1240	Valley Floor	Tilled
51	50	Davenport	1280	Valley Floor	Tilled
50	46	Delhi	1340	Valley Floor	Corn Stubble
50	46	Delhi	2010	Hilltop	Corn Stubble
51	44	Hamden	1270	Valley Floor	Corn Stubble
51	45	Hamden	1275	Valley Floor	Corn Stubble
50	45	Hamden	1300	Valley Floor	Corn Stubble
52	48	Kortright	1560	Valley Floor	Cover Crop
52	47	Kortright	1560	Valley Floor	Sod
50	-	Kortright	1940	Hillside -SW	Cover Crop
50	43	Kortright	2070	Hillside -SW	Tilled
53	-	Middletown	1570	Valley Floor	Cover Crop
53	-	Middletown	1850	Hillside -SE	Corn Stubble
52	46	Stamford	1500	Valley Floor	Cover Crop
51	46	Stamford	1500	Valley Floor	Sod
45	-	Tompkins	1200	Valley Floor	Corn Stubble

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