

COMPARISON OF COSTS FOR TRANSPLANTING VS. DIRECT SEEDED EARLY SWEET CORN:

Assumptions.....

Costs for raising early sweet corn are same in both systems for seed, land prep, row cover, fertilizer and harvesting tasks, whether crop is transplanted or direct seeded.

Added costs are limited to the production of seedlings until transplanted into ground.

Desired plant population is 21,000 plants per acre, with 36" row spacing and 8" between plants(16" if 2 seeds per cell transplanting).

At this rate, using 98 cell trays would require 110 trays per acre, and using 162's would require 65 trays per acre(same # of cells per acre, achieving same density).

Labor doubles for single seeded cell trays, as well as associated greenhouse costs
Below figures are per acre figures for double seeded trays, adjusted figure for single seeded cells listed later:

Task	For 162 tray	For 98 tray
Filling trays, seeding, setting out	10	18
Growing on 14-18 days	10	12
Transplanting	20	22
Total hours.....	40	52
Labor Costs@ \$10/hour	\$400	\$520
Soil, Vermiculite	\$25	\$45
Greenhouse Costs...\$5 per tray	\$325	\$550
Estimate on value of 2 square feet of covered, heated space, and use of trays. Could be used for higher value crops, such as bedding plants		
TOTAL ADDED COST		
TRANSPLANTING SYSTEM, PER ACRE		
If using two seed per cell.....	\$750	\$1115
If using one seed per cell.....	\$1500	\$2230

One could easily figure in **added costs of direct seeding** that are not incurred in transplanting. These would always be the *labor costs of seeding in field*, and in most cases, an *early cultivation* that is unnecessary with transplanting because the crop is so much ahead of weeds. If an herbicide is used, that cost would be constant for both systems, and hence, not an added cost for direct seeding. If mechanically cultivating, it is hard to avoid a hand weeding/hoeing in cold soils. The transplanting system generally will avoid this because the crop is far ahead of weeds and can be quickly and mechanically cultivated. One can assume 2 labor hours for seeding per acre, and 20 hours per acre for hand cultivation. At \$10/ hour the **added costs of direct seeding would total \$220.**

Thus the difference in costs per acre between the two systems would be \$530 more for double seeded 162's, and \$895 more for double seed 98's. Single seeded 162's would have \$1280 extra costs, and the single seeded 98's would be the most expensive at \$2010 added cost per acre.