

# Planting Fall Vegetables

**V**egetable gardening is not just for spring. Late summer and fall are the most ideal times to plant cool season vegetables, greens and root crops. Not only does cool weather enhance their growth rate, but light frost will improve their flavor. Another benefit to fall planting is that many common pests like caterpillar and leaf miner are not as plentiful. Cooler temperatures also enhance the colors of leafy greens and roots. Carrots are more orange, radishes are redder and red pigments in greens are more pronounced.

Soil preparation is the same as you would do in the spring. The nutrients need to be replenished and the soil tilth needs to be restored. We recommend the Sloat Loam Builder mixed 50/50 with the native soil or one bag for every 25 square feet. Be sure to work the soil to at least a one foot depth if you are considering root crops. Apply Agricultural Lime according to the directions. Lime is especially important for the cole crops. Incorporate Sure Start or E.B. Stone Vegetable food. If you plant in containers, use Sloat Organic Potting Soil and Sure Start.

## ***Favorite cool season food to grow this fall:***

- Greens: arugula, chard, endive, escarole, lettuce, Mache, spinach.
- Root crops: beets, carrots, radishes, rutabagas, turnips
- Brassicas: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, bok choy, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi
- Leafy Brassicas: collards, kale, mustard greens
- Other fall favorites: celery, fava beans, leeks, peas, spring onions. Herbs: parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme

Many cool weather vegetables are available as transplants but the root crops will need to be planted from seed. It is recommended that onions be planted by seed as opposed to sets in the fall. Seed is planted a little deeper in the fall than in the spring. The reason for this is that it is drier at the soil surface in the fall and the resulting, deeper seedlings are kept cooler. Thinning is necessary if you want good sized roots and greens heads. Be sure to keep young plants moist. Water maturing plants regularly to keep them growing. Bitterness develops in greens that are not watered enough.

Sometimes, birds can become pests in the fall vegetable garden, mostly in the early morning hours. Golden crown sparrows are notorious for eating young seedlings, especially peas. You may want to protect young plants with a lightweight row cover. You can further enhance the appearance of your vegetable garden by interplanting fall annuals like alyssum, pansies and violas.

rev082022



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