

Fall and Winter Vegetable Gardening

Western Washington has generally cool summers and mild winters in most locations. At altitudes below 1000', frost in the soil is rare and can usually be prevented with a light mulch on the soil surface. These weather conditions allow home gardeners to produce satisfactory crops of many vegetables for fall and winter harvest. However, since the fall and winter months are normally quite wet, it is important that gardens be well drained. The following vegetables can be planted in summer or early fall for fall, winter, and early spring harvest. Also see **Fact Sheet #19 Row Covers for Vegetable Gardens**.

Beans: Bush beans can be planted until late July and usually produce a good crop before frost. The bean plants develop more rapidly in the warm summer months than in early spring. Pole beans require more time to develop and should be planted by July 1 for a fall crop. Fava beans or broad beans are planted the second week of November for June harvest.

Beets: Beets can be planted until about August 1 and produce a dependable crop. If you want only the tops for beet greens, you can plant until September 1.

Swiss Chard: Chard planted by mid-July will produce a fall crop. Planted in late August, the plants will winter over and produce an earlier crop the following year than will a spring planting.

Broccoli: Broccoli can be direct seeded until mid-July and transplanted until mid-August. A fall broccoli crop will usually continue to produce until past Thanksgiving and sometimes until Christmas. Purple Sprouting (White Sprouting or Italian Sprouting) broccoli is a variety that will overwinter easily.

Brussels Sprouts: Brussels sprouts require a slightly longer growth season than broccoli. Direct seed by July 1 and/ or transplant by August 1 for a dependable fall crop. In protected spots, harvest can continue into mid-winter.

Cabbage: Ballhead cabbage for fall harvest requires the same culture as Brussels sprouts - seed by July 1 and transplant by August 1. Savoy cabbage, like broccoli, can be seeded until mid-July and transplanted until mid-August. Fall cabbage crops will hold in the garden for prolonged periods and can be harvested into early winter. Early Jersey Wakefield (or other overwintering types) can be seeded from September 1 to 15 to winter over. It is harvested in April and May.

Chinese Cabbage: Chinese cabbage is best planted in late July for a fall crop.

Carrots: A fall crop of carrots will keep in the garden until used. Plant carrots by mid-July for fall and winter harvest.

Cauliflower: Cauliflower culture for a fall crop is the same as cabbage or Brussels sprouts. Seed by July 1 and transplant by August 1. Overwintered cauliflowers are started in early July and transplanted by early August. Armado and Walcherin are the varieties to look for.

Chicory: Witloof chicory or French endive can be planted until mid-July. The roots can be dug in late fall, placed in a box of moist soil, covered with sand and forced in a warm room for winter greens.

Cornsalad: Cornsalad, also known as lamb's lettuce or fetticus, can be planted in early September for fall use, or in late October to winter over for early spring use.

Endive: Plant either the curled or broadleaf types until mid-July. In October, tie the leaves together to blanch hearts. A light mulch of straw will protect the plants from early frosts and permit harvesting into the inter months.

Garlic: Plant garlic in late October to November 10 for early summer harvest.

Kale: Kale and collards are excellent fall and winter vegetables. Plant seeds in July and transplant until mid-August.

Kohlrabi: Sow kohlrabi seed until mid-July for a fall crop. Both white and purple varieties are suitable. Harvest as soon as stems are 1½" to 2" in diameter, before the stems become woody.

Leeks: Leeks are planted only in the spring but can be hilled or mulched in fall and harvested as needed all winter.

Lettuce: All types of lettuce are suitable for fall crops. Sow head lettuce and Romaine lettuce in July. Leaf lettuce varieties can be planted until mid-August.

Mustard Greens: The mustards germinate and grow rapidly. Mustard can be seeded through September to produce fall greens. Bok Choy (Chinese mustard) should be seeded by mid-August.

Onions: Onions for green or table onion use can be seeded until mid-July for fall use. Seedings made in August will normally winter over for spring use. Onion sets can be planted any time during the fall and winter if the soil is well drained and workable.

Parsley: Can be seeded in early July for fall and spring use.

Peas: Peas can be planted in early November for an early June crop. They may not make it every winter. Green peas and edible pod peas (sugar peas) can be planted until mid-July. A moderate harvest can be expected in fall.

Radishes: Early varieties of radish can be planted throughout the growing season until mid-September. Winter radishes (Oriental types and Black Spanish) should be planted in July and can be harvested all winter.

Rutabaga: Plant in early and mid-July for fall and winter harvest. Leave them in the garden and harvest as you need all winter.

Shallots and Chives: Plant or divide both of these in late October or early November each year. They can be left in the garden year-round and harvested as desired.

Spinach: Plant spinach in mid-August for a fall crop. Plant in September to winter over for an early spring crop. Winter Bloomsdale and Savoy are overwintering types.

Turnips: For mature roots, plant turnips by mid-August. For turnip greens plant through September.

Choose early-maturing varieties of all the above crops to ensure there will be enough time for them to mature before frost slows them down or halts growth entirely.

Cover Crops: In Western Washington it is a good practice to seed garden areas that are not occupied by fall and winter crops with a cover crop. Cover crops, such as rye or vetch or a combination of the two, will benefit the garden soil by conserving nutrients, reducing weed growth and preventing erosion. A fall cover crop becomes a valuable green manure crop to plow or spade under the following spring. See **Fact Sheet #27 Green Manures**.