



The 'Days To Maturity' listed on seed packets are for spring conditions. Plants may mature faster in warm soil, or, slower as the days shorten, and as the weather cools.

Rockin E Gardening Handouts

Tips and Suggestions for 'Year-Round' Gardening

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Vegetables - Fall Planting Tips

Midsummer is the season of abundance, when gardens overflow with tomatoes, peppers, squash, beans, cucumbers, and other warm-season rewards. With all this bounty, it's hard to think of planting still more crops. But June through August is the time to get started if you want to enjoy a long, second harvest that will bring fresh food to your table through late-autumn and even into early-winter.

A fall planting offers several advantages, not the least of which is the fact that the cool weather in the fall actually improves the taste and quality of many vegetables. Green beans become more tender, Cauliflower more creamy, and greens such as Kale and Spinach more sweet. Brussel Sprouts, Broccoli and Peas are extra flavorful when a good frost or two have sweetened them up. However, no one can predict the weather, so don't be too disappointed if the weather turns extra cold, extra early. You may not be able to reap the full benefits from your hard work every year. Mother Nature has a way of 'getting-in-the-way'.



Fall gardens have long been the norm in southern states, where summers are too hot for many food crops. Many of the vegetables you buy during the winter are grown in Texas during the fall. There is no reason that you can't join the club. All you need is to pick varieties that can take the cold autumn weather, and then plant at the right time; according to the average first-frost date. In Bountiful, the average first-frost is October 15.



So where can you plant your fall garden? The answer is, 'anywhere your early crops are finished' and 'wherever you have empty space'.

By midsummer, the peas are finished and the early beans are often close to being finished. Squashbugs and borers may have killed a squash plant or your prized pumpkin. Your spinach and lettuce may have become bitter. You can completely rip out the entire bed, or you can just fill in around plants with seeds, or transplants: wherever space opens up in your garden.



When the spring peas are through, send them to the compost pile and plant turnips and lettuce. Replace beans with broccoli and lettuce. Root crops, such as beets, radishes, and carrots, are good replacements for the early lettuce and spinach crops. Remove your early corn crop and plant some peas, to help in your crop rotation plan. Don't forget the onions and garlic. Fall is the best time of the year to plant your garlic. You can harvest it early next summer.

Crops tend to mature a little slower in the fall than they mature during the heat of the summer. To determine when to plant your second crop, add a '14 day fall factor' to the days-to-maturity date shown on the seed packet. Then count back from the average first-frost date. For example, if you want to grow 'Early Frosty' peas, you would add 14 days to the 54 days-to-maturity



for this variety. That means you would count 74 days back from October 15. So, plant your fall peas around August 5.

You may be tempted to plant even a little earlier, but don't. Many fall crops need cooler weather to get started. Spinach, lettuce, and pea seeds don't germinate well in soil above 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Radishes are quick to bolt, and become extra hot, when exposed to prolonged heat. Peas tend to form plentiful foliage but few flowers in summer temperatures. Some crops, such as Swiss Chard and Collards, tolerate the heat just fine and may be planted anytime in mid-summer.



The heat and intense sun of summer can rapidly bake the soil surface, so it's a good idea to plant seeds a little deeper in summer than you would in spring. You may need to water seeds (and seedlings) twice a day during hot, dry periods. Hot weather also creates crusty soils that form a hard barrier for germinating seeds to break through.



Give carrots, beets, spinach, and other direct-seeded vegetables a helping hand by planting the seeds in a shallow furrow and covering them with vermiculite, finely screened compost, or peatmoss. The fluffy topping will not crust over. You can also start seeds indoors, and then transplant them to the garden after they're big enough to handle the heat stress.



Another trick is to cover the seed row with an old 2x4 board. Start checking your seeds after about a week to see if any signs of growth are showing. As soon as you see the new shoots appear, remove the board and cover them with a little mulch to help keep them moist.

Once up, your seedlings will need protection from the hot summer sun. Prop a piece of plywood over a newly planted seedbed, or cover it with a shade cloth. You can also look for areas in the garden that offer natural partial shade. Try planting Spinach on the east side of a row of corn, or of a bean trellis, where



it will receive afternoon shade. By the time the corn and beans are ready for the compost pile, the spinach plants are ready to take full sun.

Of course, some plants, such as Cucumbers and Beans, need warm soils to grow well. You can plant these seeds in raised beds or cover them with a plastic mulch.

Fall crops rarely require special fertilization because there is usually plenty of residual fertilizer still in the soil from the first crop. However, it doesn't hurt to give them a little **6-10-4 Vegetable and Flower Fertilizer** or **Dr. Earth Starter Fertilizer** when you first plant them. Watch the plants, if they are growing fairly rapidly you will not need to fertilize them further.



Although pest populations usually dwindle in fall, it's a good idea to check your plants routinely for the first signs of insect damage or disease. Slugs and snails can be a major problem in cool fall weather, especially on greens. Apply **Sluggo**, a safe organic slug and snail killer, around the susceptible plants, right up until the plants start to freeze. Snails do not die in the winter, they just hibernate until spring. The more you control in the fall, the fewer you will have to deal with next spring.

Most caterpillars and worms are now adults, and have left the Broccoli and Cabbage patch completely, but there may be a few grasshoppers enjoying the tender new plants in your gardens.

You may need to apply an insecticide to control these unwanted pests. Use a product that can be used close to harvest, such as **Malathion, Eight, or Insecticidal Soap**. Read the label and make sure you wait the correct length of time after you spray, before you harvest. You don't want to have your garden ready to pick and then have to wait to harvest your plants because you applied the wrong insecticide.



Powdery mildew also thrives on leaves in fall. Make sure there is good airflow around the plants. **Serenade Powdery Mildew Spray** is an organic product that can be used safely on vegetables and flowers, especially in the cool fall weather. This product can be used within a few days of harvest. Neem oil is another organic product that works great for powdery mildew in the fall, and it controls a quite a few insects as well. Be careful using Neem Oil during the hot summer weather, it can burn plants easily when the temperature is above 85 degrees F.



Choose vegetables for fall gardens that can tolerate light frost. A few, such as Kale, Peas, and Collards, can take freezing temperatures and can even be harvested in the snow. Remember, the best time to plant garlic is in October, not in April.

You can extend your fall harvest season even further into winter by using a hoophouse, a garden blanket, or floating row covers. You could even put a fence around your garden, cover it with plastic, and make it into a cold frame. A cold frame can add up to 4 extra weeks of harvest time.

With a little planning, growing a fall garden isn't too difficult, and the rewards at the dinner table are well worth the effort.



While your friends are once again visiting the supermarket's produce aisle, or opening frozen and canned vegetables, you will still be out in the garden harvesting a bounty of fresh, homegrown produce. And what can taste better than that?

More Resources:

http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/Horticulture_Home_2013-01pr.pdf

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/yard-garden/vegetables/planting-vegetables-midsummer-fall-harvest/>

https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-334/426-334_pdf.pdf

Fall Planting Schedule

June 15

Broccoli	Plant inside
Cabbage	Plant inside
Cauliflower	Plant inside

July 1 - 15

Beets	50 - 65 days
Broccoli	50 - 70 days
Cabbage	60 - 70 days
Cauliflower	50 - 70 days
Green Onions	50 - 60 days
Kohlrabi	50 - 60 days
Parsnips	100 - 120 days
Potatoes	80 - 100 days
Summer Squash	40 - 50 days
Swiss Chard	50 - 60 days
Sweet Corn (risky)	60 - 70 days



July 15 - 31

Beets	50 - 65 days
Broccoli	use transplants
Cabbage	use transplants
Cauliflower	use transplants
Carrots	50 - 70 days
Cucumbers	55 - 60 days
Green Onions	50 - 60 days
Kohlrabi	50 - 60 days
Lettuce	30 - 40 days
Swiss Chard	50 - 60 days
Peas	60 - 70 days
Radishes	25 - 30 days
Spinach	40 - 50 days
Turnips	50 - 60 days



Organic Garden Pest Strips can help Control Insects

August 1 - 15

Beets	50 - 65 days
Carrots	50 - 70 day
Green Onions	50 - 60 days
Kohlrabi	50 - 60 days
Lettuce	30 - 40 days
Onions	Harvest next spring
Peas	60 - 70 days
Radishes	25 - 30 days
Shallots	Harvest next spring
Spinach	40 - 50 days
Turnips	50 - 60 days



September 30 - October 15

Garlic	Harvest next summer
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