

Extending the Vegetable Garden into Fall



Fall is an excellent time to grow many vegetable crops. During this season the gardener can take advantage of cooler temperatures and more plentiful moisture. Many spring-planted crops such as

lettuce and spinach tend to bolt, or produce seed, and become bitter in response to the long, hot summer days. Fall gardening helps to extend your gardening season so that you can continue to harvest garden produce after earlier crops have faded.

Many vegetable crops are well adapted to planting in mid to late summer for a fall harvest. Use fast-maturing cultivars whenever possible to ensure a harvest before killing frost occurs.

Deciding What to Plant

First, you must determine what you want to grow. Take a look at your preferences and what you and your family like to eat. Look at extending the growing season for those plants that “fizzle out” by mid to late summer. For example, squash (zucchini) can be pretty shabby by August. The same goes for peas and bush beans. Tomato plants are mostly finished by September, or are producing very little. However, short-season varieties of tomato plants that are planted in mid to late June will provide a renewed flush of tomatoes late into fall. Keep the fall garden in mind while planning and purchasing your spring garden seeds and plants. Garden Gate Greenhouse will have late transplants of some short-season tomato varieties in late June. We are one of the



few garden centers to grow an additional crop of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and lettuce for your fall planting needs. These transplants are available from mid to late July into the fall season.

When to Plant

To determine when to plant a particular vegetable for the latest harvest, you must know the average date of the first killing frost in your area, as well as the cultivar’s number of days to maturity.



The chart on the back of this brochure indicates the last feasible planting dates for our area for mid to late plantings, using average maturing rates for short-season cultivars. Or, you can use the formula below to determine a planting date.

To estimate when to plant fall crops, use the following formula:

- + Number of days if seeded directly or transplanted outdoors to harvest
- + If you start your own transplants, number of days from seed to transplantable size
- + Average harvest period
- + Fall factor (about 14 days)
- + Frost Tender Factor (14 days) (if applicable)

- = Days to count back from the first expected fall frost

How to Plant

Late summer plantings often suffer from hot soil and a lack of water. If you are planting seeds, soils may form a hard crust over the seeds which can interfere with seed germination, particularly in heavy soils. Use a light mulch of vermiculite, compost, or potting soil over the seed row to prevent a crust from forming. Seeds of lettuce, peas, and spinach will not germinate well when the soil temperature is 85°F and above. Shading the soil and using a light mulch over the seed row will help keep the temperature more favorable for germination. Planting the seeds slightly deeper than spring plantings may also be beneficial, since temperatures will be slightly cooler.

Frost Protection



Some vegetables that are already growing in the garden will continue to produce well into the fall, but are damaged by even a light frost. Some crops are considered semi-hardy and will withstand a

light frost without protection. Others are hardy enough to withstand several hard frosts. We have included a cold tolerance chart on the back of this brochure, where you will find many common vegetables listed according to their frost tolerance.

You can extend the fall growing season for tender crops by protecting them through early light frosts. Indiana often enjoys several more weeks of good growing weather after the first frost. Cover growing beds with blankets or throw-cloths supported by stakes or wire to prevent mechanical injury to the plants.

Information for this brochure was taken from Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service Publication HO-66-W.

Fall Vegetable Planting Guide for Central-Northern Indiana

Crop	Average Days to Harvest	Last Feasible Planting Date
From Seed:		
Beets	50	Aug. 15
Carrots	60	Aug. 5
Collards	80	July 19
Endive	95	July 4
Leaf Lettuce	40	Aug. 25
Kale	60	Aug. 5
Kohlrabi	50	Aug. 15
Peas	60	Aug. 5
Radish	25	Sept. 15
Bush Beans	50	July 21
Spinach	40	Aug. 25
Swiss Chard	50	Aug. 15
Turnip	50	Aug. 15
From Transplants:		
Broccoli	50	Aug. 10
Brussels Sprouts	55	Aug. 10
Cabbage	50	Aug. 10
Cauliflower	50	Aug. 10
Chinese Cabbage	50	Aug. 10
Green Onion	40	Aug. 25

Cold Tolerance Of Vegetables

Tender Vegetables (damaged by light frost):

Beans * Cucumbers * Eggplant * Muskmelon
New Zealand Spinach * Okra * Pepper *
Pumpkin * Squash * Sweet Corn * Sweet
Potato * Tomato * Watermelon

Semi-hardy Vegetables (tolerate light frost):

Beets * Carrots * Cauliflower * Celery *
Chard * Chinese Cabbage * Endive * Lettuce
* Parsnip * Potato * Salsify

Hardy Vegetables (tolerate hard frost):

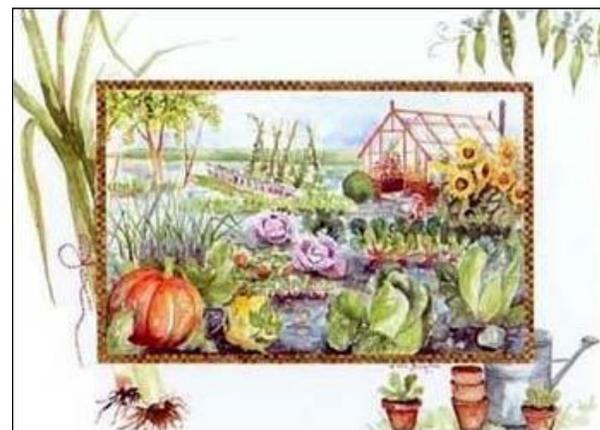
Broccoli * Brussels Sprouts * Cabbage * Col-
lards * Kale * Kohlrabi * Mustard Greens *
Onion * Parsley * Peas * Radish * Spinach *
Turnips

Did You Know?

Tomato cuttings can be taken from a growing plant to form your own tomato transplants. Take a short (2-3 in.) tip cutting from a lateral shoot of your mature tomato plant. Use a clean, sharp knife to avoid crushing the stem. Root in water until roots are about 1/2" long. [This should take no more than 2-3 weeks.] Plant in a pot or directly into your garden. You may need to "pamper" a bit during very hot weather until your plant is established.



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