

Fall and Winter Vegetable Gardens

Western Washington has generally cool summers and mild winters in most locations. At attitudes below 1000 feet, frost in the soil is rare and can usually be prevented with light mulch on the soil surface. This combination of weather conditions allows 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.

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 the second week of June for November harvest.

Beets

Beets can be planted until about August 1, and produce a dependable crop. If you only want the tops for beet greens, you can plant until September 1. Lutz or Winterkeeper are good winter cultivars.

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 (or Italian sprouting) broccoli can be planted on the same schedule, over winter, and will produce lots of tasty shoots in April or May.

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. January King is one that will usually last extremely well. 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. Jersey Wakefield cabbage can be seeded from September 1 to 15, to winter over. It is harvested in April and May.

Chard

Chard planted by mid-July will produce a fall crop, or planted in late August will winter over and produce an earlier crop the following year than the spring planting. White-ribbed cultivars are more frost hardy than those with red mid-rib.

Chinese Cabbage

Chinese cabbage is best planted in late July for a fall crop. Chinese King is a good fall cultivar.

Carrots

A fall crop of carrots will keep in the garden until used. Red Core Chantinay overwinters without splits or loss of flavor better than some of the more tender cultivars such as Nautes. Plant carrots by mid-July for fall and winter harvest. Grow under floating row covers if carrot rustfly has been a problem.

Cauliflower

Cauliflower culture for a fall crop is the same as cabbage and Brussels sprouts. Seed by July 1, and transplant by August 1. Overwinter cultivars like Armado and Walcherin can be started on the same schedule and harvested in spring.

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 feticus, 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 broad leaf types until mid-July. In October, tie the leaves together to blanch hearts. A light mulch of straw will protect it from early frosts and permit harvesting into winter 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. Frost may cause unappetizing yellowing of blue kale, so green varieties are best for winter crops. The flower shoots produced in spring on both these crops are delicious as well.

Kohlrabi

Sow kohlrabi seed until mid-July for a fall crop. Both white and purple varieties are suitable. Harvest as soon as they are 1-1/2' to 2' in diameter, before they become woody.

Leeks

Leeks are only planted 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. Salad bowl, Prizehead and Red Sails are some to try.

Mustard Greens

The mustards germinate and grow rapidly. Mustard can be seeded through September to produce fall greens. Bok toy (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. Seedlings 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. Walla Walla Sweets and Sweet Winter are two cultivars that usually perform well here.

Parsley

Seed in early July for fall and spring use. Cilantro seeded in August and overwintered as seedlings will produce an early spring crop.

Peas

Peas can be planted in early November for an early June crop. Green peas and edible pod peas (sugar peas) can be planted until mid-July. A moderate harvest can be expected in fall.

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