



Growing Winter Vegetables

Benefits of Growing Your Own

As sustainability and self-sufficiency gain popularity, so does home gardening. Personal satisfaction, access to varieties, and economics are also among the many reasons for growing your own vegetables.

What to Plant

West of the Cascades, there are many vegetables that can be planted in summer to harvest in fall or winter and some that can be left in the ground to overwinter for an early spring crop.

- Cole crops – broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower
- Root vegetables – beets, carrots, kohlrabi, radish, rutabaga, turnip
- Greens – collard, kale, lettuce, spinach, Swiss chard
- Legumes – peas, fava beans
- Overwintering vegetables – Brassicas, root vegetables

When to Plant

It is important to know the first frost date for your area. Consult planting guides with times to plant seeds and transplants. Plant most vegetables in July, August and September for fall, winter, and spring harvests; plant garlic and shallots in October for harvesting the following summer.

How to Plant

Source

Vegetables can be directly sown from seed or transplanted from starts. Use plants that are specifically designated for fall planting.

Location

Choose a site that gets six to eight hours of sunlight. Take advantage of structures such as south-facing walls or fences that reflect and hold heat longer. Raised beds, made with wood structures or made simply by mounding soil, heat up earlier in the spring and hold heat longer. Be sure that your site is protected from strong winds and that the soil has good drainage.

Soil Preparation

Next, prepare your soil by removing any rocks and weeds and amend the soil as needed. Clay soil can be improved by adding organic matter. If needed apply a low-nitrogen fertilizer to focus growth on roots and fruit, not on leaves. Do not use a high nitrogen fertilizer on crops in fall because it can stimulate late leaf growth which are susceptible to frost damage. Ensure your

beds have at least 15 to 18 inches of loose soil to allow adequate room for root growth and water distribution. If your dry soil is too hard to dig, try soaking it in advance.

Caring for Your New Plants

If it's hot and sunny when you plant, young plants will need extra care. Water transplants daily. You might need to sprinkle seeds and newly germinated seedlings twice a day so they don't dry out.

To keep the soil moist and protect young plants from the sun, temporarily shade them. Boards and umbrellas make good shade structures.

As cold weather approaches, mulch your plants with leaves or straw. Row covers, cloches, plastic tunnels, and cold frames make good season extenders.

Harvesting Your Fall and Winter Garden

Root vegetables such as turnips, beets and carrots are sweeter after a frost, which causes the plant to concentrate its sugars. These crops can be left in the ground and harvested throughout the winter. Lettuce and other salad greens will slow their growth during cold weather but can be hardy to 20° F with some protection.

OSU Extension Service Resources

Get these publications online at <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu>

Fall and Winter Vegetable Gardening in the Pacific Northwest PNW 548

Constructing Coldframes and Hotbeds FS 246-E

How to Build Your Own Raised-Bed Cloche EC 1627

Grow Your Own EM 9027

Grow Your Own Rhubarb EC 797

Grow Your Own Tomatoes and Tomatillos EC 1333

Storing Pumpkin and Winter Squash at Home EC 1632

Improving Garden Soil with Organic Matter EC 1561

Soil Fertility in Organic Systems PNW646

Master Gardener™ Advice

- Call Home Horticulture Helpline: 503-655-8631 (Clackamas County), 503-821-1150 (Washington County), or 503-445-4608 (Multnomah County).
- Visit www.cmastergardeners.org for 10-Minute University™ handouts and videos
- Look for Master Gardeners at area Farmers' Markets.

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