

WHAT SHOULD I DO IN MY FALL GARDEN?

Start Planning Now

- August Plant fall vegetable crops
- August Plant cover crops
- September Protect crops from cold & frost
- Sept/Oct Continue to improve soil
- October Sanitation
- October Tool maintenance
- Oct/Nov Plant Garlic

Hints for Growing Cole Crops



- For varieties that form head (broccoli, cabbage or cauliflower) sow seed by mid-July or plant 3-4 week old transplants in August
- Leaf types can be sown through September, kale tolerates heat better
- Need uniform moisture for germination and production!
 - Mulch!

Planting Strategy



- Direct seed in warm soil (keep moist)
 - Beets
 - Radishes
 - Turnips & Rutabagas
 - Overwintering carrots
 - English Peas (iffy)
 - Kale
- Start seeds in cool place & transplant in August
 - Lettuce
 - Spinach
 - Chard
 - Broccoli, cauliflower
 - Onions

- Thin young greens (beet tops, chard, turnips, kale, etc)
- Light frost will sweeten kale
- Leave center of kale & chard to regrow in spring, mulch if your ground freezes
- Dig carrots, root crops throughout winter

Harvesting Strategies



Cover Crops Have Many Uses

- Usually plant in August – need to water
- Use as “green manure” by tilling under in spring to add organic matter to garden. Or cut repeatedly & add to compost.
- Can leave as perennial in orchards or pathways to prevent erosion & compete with weeds.
- Plant for a couple season in beds for soil improvement
- Attracts beneficial insects

- Pump varying amounts of nitrogen back into soil
- Need to match crop to goals
 - Field peas – cold-hardy
 - Mammoth red clover – 3' tall, cold-hardy, breaks up clay soil
 - Crimson clover – OK ground cover, attracts pollinators
 - White clover – short, good between beds
 - Alfalfa – produces biomass, easier to cut
 - Vetch – forage crop, hard to cut because of vining, will reseed

Legume Cover Crops



Cereal & Grass Cover Crops



- Provide ground cover (reduce erosion) & biomass
- Winter rye grain, barley, oats, etc
- Can underplant with legume
- Not as cold tolerant as some legumes
- Have to remove seed or they become weeds

Care for perennial vegetables & fruit

- Cut back asparagus after berries & yellowing, then mulch
- Prune summer-bearing raspberries to 2-3' cane
- Mulch strawberries
- Wait til shrubs & trees are dormant & worst of damaging freezes are past to prune



Plant Garlic!

- End of October/early November
- Cover with mulch



Pot plants for winter access
(herbs, peppers, tomatoes)

Improve Your Soil



- Mulch, mulch, mulch
- Now's the time to work in unfinished compost
- Work into soil:
 - seed-free manures or hot manures like poultry
 - chipped leaves & straw that will break down
 - soil amendments like phosphorus & lime (test pH)
- Don't add soluble nitrogen

Sanitation



- Remove diseased plants
- Clean out annuals, particularly tomatoes, squash & beans (burn or bag, don't compost)
- Remove weeds & debris to eliminate overwintering sites for insects & disease
- Rake up fruit tree leaves. Can use as mulch vegetable garden.
- In winter, if not too wet, till soil to expose insect eggs to birds & weed seeds to freezing temps

Protect from Frost & Cold

- Row covers
- Tunnel rows
- Cold frame
- Hot frame & straw bale
- Hoop House
- Greenhouse



What are you trying to do?

- Protect against frost? Try row covers, tunnel rows, hoop house, etc
 - Maybe 2-5°F warmer than outside
 - Minimal passive system can work
 - Sun warms soil during day
 - Warm soil is heat source at night
 - Cover helps warm soil and slows heat loss
- Protect against freeze? Probably need greenhouse, cold frame or very heavy fabric cover
 - Maybe 8-10°F warmer than outside
 - Passive can work but need to consider every heat loss
- Consider microclimate, snow load, waterlogged soil, etc

Row Covers

- Short term
- Fabric laid directly over crop
- Some frost & wind protection
- More for insect protection
- 2°F frost protection



Tunnel Rows

- Plastic on wire hoops or mesh
- Plants freeze where plastic touches
- Can be left on, need ventilation
- 2-4° frost protection



Cold Frames



- Location, location, location!
- Sunny, facing south, sheltered from wind & SNOW
- Against heated wall
- Need good drainage, but with water supply
- Space blanket or insulation for hard freeze
- Good way to use old windows & shower doors
 - Double paned is best
 - Be careful with non-safety glass

Strawbale Cold Frame or Hot Bed



- What about “manure-heated” hotbed?
 - - need good drainage
 - - about 18” of manure

- Harder to open for ventilation
- Consider wood frame on top of straw bales
- Both have added heat due to decomposition



Hoop Houses (High Tunnels)

- PVC or galvanized steel tube frame
- Heavy duty (6 mil) plastic sheeting
- Seeds planted directly in ground
- Consider SNOW!
- Maybe compost bins inside to add heat



Plan for Composting in the Winter

- Spread unfinished compost in garden
- Vermiculture?
- If you're going to keep your compost pile over winter, cover it with plastic to prevent leaching of nitrogen



Tool Maintenance



- Drain fuel tanks & hoses
- Scrub dirt off tools, put in bucket of sand & oil
- Turn containers upside down (to prevent breakage during freeze)
- Put stuff away 😊