

Time for fall garden planting

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Published August 19, 2017

While we may be quickly nearing the end of August, it doesn't mean that you have to stop enjoying vegetables in the garden. In fact, it means that you should start thinking about planting your garden!

It's a great time to start seeding lettuce, spinach, and other fall crops that tolerate cooler temperatures as well as frost.

You can enjoy fresh garden salads through September and October and even longer if you use some of the season-extension methods.

Prepare the soil for fall planting as you would in the spring. Make sure it's not too wet to work the soil before planting.

Consider planting those vegetables that prefer cooler temperatures such as kale, turnips, mustard, lettuce, spinach, broccoli, and cabbage.

All of these will tolerate cool temperatures and in fact, will thrive with warm sunny days and cool nights.

If you are not sure if a crop will grow to maturity in the next few months, take a look at the days to maturity on the seed packet or it will be listed in the seed catalog.

For instance, it takes beets 50-70 days to mature. If you planted a 50 day variety today, you might be ok because they would mature around October 7th. If you planted a 70 day variety, and we had a hard frost before the end of October, they might not survive.

Basically you need to look at the days of maturity and determine if you have enough time to grow something, and compare this to the potential weather for October.

Or, like I said, use season-extension methods such as row or grow covers or a poly cover to protect the crop.

I like to plant a fall crop of broccoli and cabbage but I usually have to hunt for these at the garden centers. There isn't enough time to start them from seed unless you start in mid-July or early August.

I also like to plant onions for a fall green onions but I don't normally find these in stores in the fall. Therefore, I try to purchase these in the summer when I can find them. Or I buy extra in the spring and store them for fall; only to forget where I store them!

Therefore, it's recommended that you start these from transplants at this time.

I will be planting my fall selection of lettuces (I like a variety of blends all mixed together in one bed) and some spinach. I still have kale from the spring planting so I will keep that going.

If you are into starting plants from seed, you can also start perennials at this time. Many times I'll find seeds on sale or clearance and will throw them in the garden in an area specifically for my new seeds.

Then, next spring I'll transplant any perennial that come back – if I remember where I planted them in the first place!

Note – I am taking a two week break and will return on September 9th!