



Planting Fall Vegetables—September 2009

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Football may be heating up, but the temperatures are going to start cooling down. Just because summer is drawing to a close doesn't mean that the vegetable gardener needs to put up her hoe and dream of the first red tomato in 2010. Our first freeze should be between November 8th and December 2nd, so we still have plenty of time. Now is the time to start growing some fall and winter vegetables.

Strike while the iron is hot—seed beets, collards, mustard, turnips, snap beans, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower as soon as possible. Bulbs like shallots and green onion can also be planted. You can also transplant broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage to get a jump start. Other fall crops will need to be planted during the second part of the fall gardening season, which begins in September-early October. Seeding for these include carrots, endive, lettuce, onion, parsley, English peas, bulbing shallots and radish. Plant garlic in October. Consider interval plantings of the same crop to prolong the season. If you plant a row of cabbage now, think about planting another short row in a few weeks to ensure you have a longer season.

When you transplant some of the more the more tender plants that have been kept under shady areas, you should think about protecting them from the bright sun for a few days and be prepared to water the transplants until they become established. If you seed your row too thick, if you *gently* pull up the plants, you can sometimes salvage them and put them in another row. Be prepared to give them a little shade and moisture because the root system isn't well developed.

| Suggested Fall Garden Vegetables | |
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| Bush Snap Beans | Kohlrabi |
| Beets | Lettuce |
| Broccoli | Mustard |
| Cabbage | Onions |
| Carrots | Radishes |
| Cauliflower | Rutabagas |
| Chard | Spinach |
| Chinese Cabbage | Turnips |

A fall garden is open to attack by insects and diseases just as the summer garden. Worms (cabbage loopers and imported cabbage moths) are serious problems on fall cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, and collards. Control these leaf-eating worms with one of the biological sprays with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). It should be reapplied weekly because it will break down in sunlight. Bt acts by producing proteins (delta-endotoxin, the "toxic crystal") that reacts with the cells of the gut lining of susceptible insects. These Bt proteins paralyze the digestive system, and the infected insect stops feeding within hours. Bt-affected insects generally die from starvation, which can take several days (<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/Insect/05556.html>)

Fall vegetables need fertilizer just as much as spring and summer vegetables. Don't count on the fertilizer applied in spring to supply fertilizer needs of vegetables planted in late summer and fall. Fertilize before planting and side-dress as needed.

Finally, if you really want to take a break prior to the spring crops, at least clean up debris and put your stakes and poles away. The Fall is good time to take a soil test and put out lime for it to have enough time to react for your spring crop. You could even get a row or two ready to plant potatoes come late January/early February.

Need more information? Check out the [Vegetable Gardening Guide](#) for more details on planting densities, dates, varieties, and pest control. As always, you are welcome to call the Escambia County Extension office at 850.475.5230.