

## **Gardening in the Late Summer and Fall**

Enthusiastic gardeners know, there is always something to do in the garden...even late in the season! As the summer bounty is harvested, you may find yourself with some spaces to fill. Why not put in some fast-growing and cold-tolerant plants to grow another harvest before the arrival of frost? You can even add some colour to your garden after summer blooms begin to fade with cold-tolerant flowers such as pansies and sweet peas. There are a surprising number of options for late-summer and fall planting.

### **Greens**

With relatively short growing seasons, many varieties of leafy greens can be sown in late summer and harvested in the fall. Several types of lettuce can withstand chilly temperatures and even light frost. Kale and spinach are both very cold-tolerant, and spinach is known for its ability to germinate quickly and produce a harvest within a few weeks. Some other suggestions include collards, swiss chard, arugula, bok choy, and cabbage. There are some varieties of greens which have been specifically bred to survive in even colder temperatures and withstand frost. If you want to keep your garden producing long into the fall, here are a few options to try: Winter Density Lettuce, Dwarf Siberian Kale, Giant Winter Spinach, or Brunswick Cabbage.

### **Root Veggies**

When it comes to quick and hardy root vegetables, carrots, beets, radishes, turnips, rutabagas, and parsnips are all good choices. And did you know that even if frost kills the above ground greens, the roots themselves can often still be harvested and enjoyed? Some great varieties to keep in mind: fast-growing Nantes carrots, cold-tolerant carrots such as Napoli or Yaya, Early Wonder or Merlin beets, Easter egg radishes, and Purple Prince turnips.

### **Microgreens**

No need for cold tolerance when you can enjoy tasty results in a week or two! Many different plants can be grown as microgreens. Kale, cress, alfalfa, carrots, radishes, beets, broccoli, and wheatgrass are some of the favourites here. Sow seeds thickly since microgreens are meant to be enjoyed while immature, no thinning will be needed.

### **More late season options**

Sugar Snap peas, celery, onions, garlic, green onions, leeks, and some herbs such as parsley, chives, oregano, thyme, rosemary, sage, and basil can all survive as the weather cools off. Most brassicas do very well in the cold as well, we have eaten some broccoli here after dusting off a light snow to harvest! Choose the varieties of these with the shortest growing season, such as De Cicco broccoli, Sorrento broccolini, or Snow Crown cauliflower.

### **Overwintering**

As the end of summer approaches, many gardeners begin thinking ahead to next year. What better way to get a head start than to plant a few things to look forward to? In fact, for garlic and onions, fall is the ideal time to get them in the ground. They have such a long growing

season that they need to be planned a year in advance. Asparagus is another veggie in need of some patience. It can also be started in the fall, and will mature in 2-3 years.

There are plenty of perennials that will save you time by coming back year after year, especially with a good amount of mulch cover. Everbearing strawberries, artichoke, rhubarb, good king henry, sorrel, and horseradish are all good options.

You may also want to leave a few of those bolted plants to reseed themselves. Quite a few greens and herbs will do this without much outside help, including arugula, mustard, lettuce, spinach, chives, chamomile, cilantro and dill. You might also get some “volunteers” from melons or squash left in the garden, and certain root veggies left to go to seed such as carrots and radishes.

Certain types of Kale, leeks, and brussel sprouts might even make it through winter above ground, depending on which zone you are in. If you want to give this a try, make sure you use plenty of mulch, some cover, and choose a location that maximises what little sun exposure is available through those short winter days.

No matter what you choose, be sure to consider your specific growing zone and the average date of the first fall frost in your area. This will help you choose varieties that are best suited to your local climate so that you can enjoy a productive and beautiful garden well into the fall months.