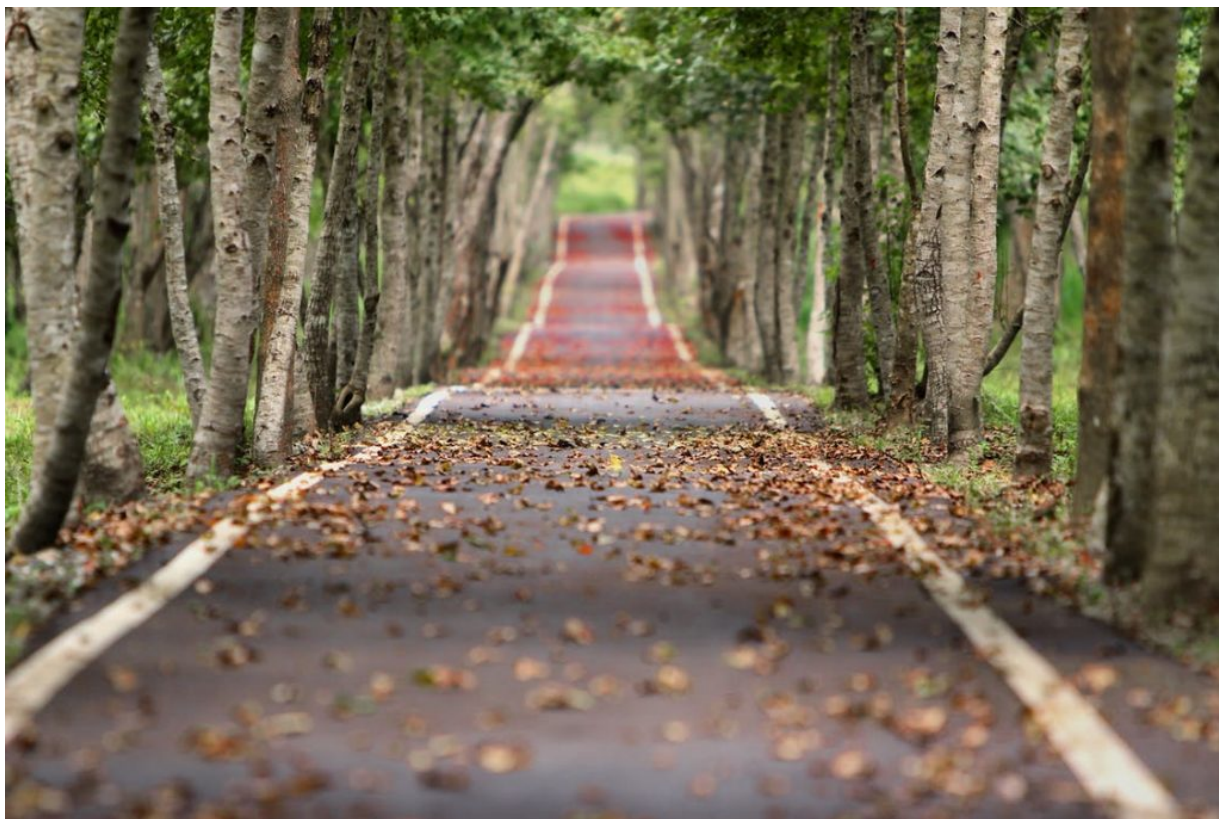


Goodbye Summer: Time to Keep an Eye on the Forecast



Here in the Northeast, summer seems to have disappeared overnight. Which, I'm totally fine with. I honestly only appreciate the warm weather because it makes my garden happy. I'm ready to embrace the cold right about now. I find having a winter break is an excellent way to reset my motivation meter for the next season of planting and digging. Right around mid-January I start to get the itch to plan my garden again, though.

Right now, things are still looking green and lush in my raised beds. Despite the fluctuation in temperature, my eggplants, tomatoes, and peppers are still enjoying the afternoon sun. Does the cold weather mean that it's time to pack up? Not at all. But for the frugal gardener, paying close attention to your plants while the weather dances around is mighty important.

September tasks

This month still calls for harvesting. In fact, many plants are producing more than I can keep up with. This is the month where preserving my vegetables is at the forefront of my mind mainly because I'm sick of eating salads and fresh sliced cucumbers. To prevent waste and keep dollars in my pocket down the road during the winter, I do a lot more preserving at the tail end of the season. My favorite September kitchen tasks include:

- [Making tomato jam](#)
- Chopping up ingredients for fresh salsa
- Making pickles (out of cucumbers, peppers, and anything else that I have an abundance of)
- Cutting up chunks of eggplant to freeze for fall stews

Additionally, I'll sow fast-growing seeds (radishes, mesclun, etc.) this month. Any plants not doing well or those that have run their course, are pulled from the garden. Slowly cleaning up saves time later on in the fall.

The forecast ahead

Just because things are cooling down right now, doesn't mean it will remain chilly all week or month. While someone with money to burn might just let Mother Nature run her course, a frugal gardener needs to keep their eyes on what's coming weather-wise.

If you've got plants that are still healthy and producing, you don't want a random frost to wipe everything out. Pay attention to the weather, so you can cover plants or bring them inside at a moment's notice. I have a particularly impressive pepper plant this season, and I've moved it to my porch so I can keep a closer eye on it and bring it in if the nighttime temps get too cold. Peppers are one of my favorite veggies, and they can be costly at the supermarket, so I'm keen on keeping the plant alive as long as possible!