

# What to Plant in your Fall or Winter Garden



Tending a fall or winter garden can give you a new appreciation for usually bitter vegetables. Cool-weather crops react to frost by making more sugars resulting in deliciously

different-tasting harvests.

Not sure what to plant for a cool-weather garden?

## Beets, Carrots, Rutabagas, and Other Root Vegetables

Many of these veggies thrive in cold weather.

### Beets

This popular root vegetable germinates the best in cold weather and gets sweeter with a frost. [Pickled beets](#) and [beet sugar](#) syrup are 2 popular recipes for beets.

### Carrots

Plant carrots during the fall and harvest before temps are consistently cold. The cold can sap their color and taste. You can order specific varieties adapted for cold weather that you can grow during the most challenging part of the winter.

### Rutabagas

A cross between a turnip and cabbage, the rutabaga must mature in cold weather, so they are the first choice for a winter garden.

### Radishes

In addition to being cold hardy to 20°, radishes can grow back from roots if their foliage is damaged by cold.

## Cabbage and Its Spinoffs

Cabbage, Brussel sprouts, kale, cauliflower, and broccoli descend from the same plant. Cabbage and kale are focused on producing leaves. Cauliflower and broccoli are the flowers.



These are perfect for a fall or winter garden because they all thrive in cold weather. They can weather harsh weather, below freezing, and still be ready to pick and enjoy.

## **Celery and Swiss Chard**

Living in a warmer climate like the South, you can grow celery in a winter garden. However, if you live in a cold environment, you must pick celery before a significant frost hits.

Swiss Chard is your pick if you live in a colder place. It can survive dips to 15° without protection and lower temperatures if you take precautions to keep the frost off its foliage.

## **Spinach, Lettuce, and Other Leafy Greens**

Leafy greens grow well in fall and winter gardens, and those in frigid climates can get seeds for varieties well adapted for the cold.

Spinach does slow its growth during the winter but grows very well in the fall and spring.

For things like lettuce, you can simply remove any leaves damaged by weather and pick the young, tender leaves underneath. And your plant will continue to grow.

## **Green Onions**

Extremely cold hardy, they will grow through the snow. And you can get 3 or 4 harvests off of a single bulb before you need to replant.

# Leeks

This is a tasty but overlooked veggie in the same family as garlic and onions. They are perfect for a cold weather garden because they are cold hardy to 0°.

## Conclusion

Fall and winter do not have to signal the end of your gardening year. On the contrary, planning and growing a fall or winter garden can keep you in delicious, cheap produce during the cold months. So what vegetables do you want to plant in your fall or winter garden?

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## Winding Down For The Season



It's time to start thinking about winding down for the season. Especially if you live in a cold climate like me.

You're probably thinking: "Wait. Isn't it too early?"

True! It's too early to be shutting down the garden just yet. You're probably still harvesting. And maybe you've even planted some cool-season crops that you plan to harvest in the fall.

So that's why I'm talking about winding down and not closing up shop.

It's time to start thinking about winding down, which means it's time to think ahead. It doesn't mean you need to do everything all at once. By starting early, you can do a gradual [cleanup of the garden](#). This strategy is a whole lot less overwhelming than a complete cleanup at the end of the season.

## Winding down for the season: How to do it

Here are some things to think about as you walk about in your garden this September.

**Get rid of any dead plants.** Do this now. Wait too long, and the ground will freeze, making it tough to pull out plants completely. Pulling plants now also decreases the chances that pests will make a home out of the dead foliage for the winter.

**Add organic matter to empty slots in the garden.** Start amending the soil now in preparation for the spring. You don't need to wait to do it all in one fell swoop, though. As you toss dead pepper and tomato plants, add [compost](#) to those spots.

**Put away spring-specific tools.** Tidy up tools and supplies you don't need anymore. This includes seed starting stuff. Many gardeners keep these supplies hanging around because they're in 'growing mode' throughout the summer season. But now it's

time to put those things away. Clean them up now, so they're ready to use in the spring.

**Plant bulbs.** Some flowers and perennials do best when planted in the fall. You don't want to plant too early, but now is the time to start thinking about what you might want to plant and where.

**Collect other supplies.** Already bought your fall planting bulbs? Great! You're right on track. You might need other supplies for your garden wind down, though. Grab things like mulch and soil amendments now, so you have them on hand when it's time to use them for things like protecting perennial and tree roots from freeze-thaw cycles.

**Ask someone for help.** Tree leaves are still bright green, but they'll start turning vibrant colors and dropping like flies when fall arrives. If you have many leaf-shedding trees around your garden and home, enlist some leaf raking help now. Ask family and friends if they'll help you when the time comes and offer some fresh produce in exchange for a helping hand.

**Catalog your seeds.** Take stock of what you have on hand for next year and make a note of what needs replenishing. I like to take a break from gardening in the winter, so I try not to think about seeds or other garden-related things when it's cold outside. But I always make sure to check my [seed collection](#) before closing up shop. You might decide to save some seeds from plants in your garden if you're running low.

What's your take on winding down for the season? Do you do it all at once, or do you take it slow like I do?

I know not all frugal gardeners like this kind of piecemeal approach to closing up the garden. But for gardeners with limited energy stores, taking it slow can be a real help. As a gardener with a chronic illness, sometimes small tasks can feel insurmountable. Breaking them up makes it possible to get them done and reserve energy for cooking all the lovely



produce I harvest.