



Fall Gardening

I. When to Start a Fall Garden in Tucson.

a. Late summer/early fall.

- i. Late August through mid-September is the start of the fall planting season.
With protection, a few cool season plants can be planted at this time.
- ii. The best crops to plant during this period are those that are heat tolerant or those that require a long growing season



b. Optimum fall planting period.

- i. The period from late September through the first few weeks of November is the best time to plant cool season vegetables, all cool season vegetables can be planted during this period.
- ii. The average date of first frost for Tucson is November 15th.
- iii. Peas and Garlic do best when planted later in October

c. Late fall/early winter.

- i. After the winter break, the last chance to plant cool season crops is the period between New Years and mid-February.
- ii. Fast maturing crops, can be planted before the weather warms. Choose slow bolting varieties and harvest immature plants before the go to flower.

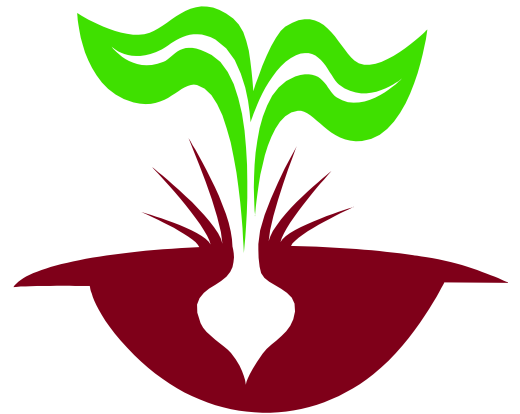
II. What to plant in your fall garden.

a. Leafy Greens

- i. Arugula, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, dandelion, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, mizuna, mustard greens, spinach, and Swiss chard.
- ii. Asian greens such as bok choy, Chinese cabbage, and komatsuna.
- iii. Light frost improves the flavor of many greens
- iv. When choosing lettuce, avoid tight heading types such as “ice berg”, instead choose Romaine or leaf varieties. Bibb varieties also do well.

b. Root crops

- i. Beet, carrots garlic, leek, onions, radish and turnips.
- ii. Use thinnings in salads.
- iii. Root crops are most tender when young, harvest before they reach a diameter of 3”.
- iv. Garlic takes six months to mature, so plan accordingly.



c. Cool season annual herbs

- i. Chives, cilantro, dill, fennel, parsley.
- ii. Plants in the carrot family are the best for attracting beneficial insects, plant these herbs in the center of your garden and let them go to flower for the best control.
- iii. *although not a root, green, or herb, **fava beans** can also be planted now.

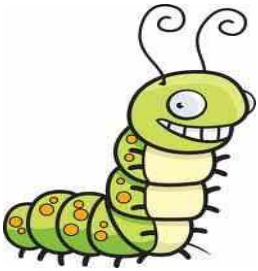
III. Protecting your fall garden.

a. **Weather** – Frost protection is a must for the fall garden. If frost is in the forecast, you can take precautions to limit the damage.

- i. Light frost = 32°-28° - Plants that can withstand a light frost include arugula, beets, bok choy, carrots, lettuce, peas, and Swiss chard.
- ii. Peas and leaf lettuce show the least tolerance for frost.
- iii. Hard Frost = 28° or lower. Plants that can withstand a hard frost include broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, collards, kale, mustard, onions, spinach, and turnip.

- iv. Mulch heavily to keep roots warm on cold nights.
- v. Water garden heavily the day before an expected frost, water acts as an insulator, keeping the root zone warmer than the surrounding air temperature. Misting also works to create an “igloo” effect.
- vi. Frost cloth is a thick transparent fabric that works like a blanket, trapping warm air near the growing plants. It is most effective when allowed to cover the entire plant to ground level. In a pinch, sheets can also be used, but they must be removed promptly the next morning. Never use plastic, as it can actually exacerbate a frost.
- vii. Holiday lights, especially older types with large bulbs, draped throughout the garden are great at generating heat, combine with other methods for added effect.

b. Insects



- i. Cabbage Looper – Very common during the early fall and winter months. Use a BT product once a week once damage appears.
- ii. Cabbage Aphid – Usually appears in early fall and then again in spring. Stressed plants are most affected. Use insecticidal soap and a jet of water for control.

c. Birds

- i. Pea and bean sprouts are a bird delicacy. Use row covers, or cloches to protect young sprouts. Once plants reach about 5”, the birds do not bother them

