

## **Prepare fall/winter vegetable garden now**

We're fortunate to be able to grow a winter vegetable garden and now's the time to start.

Cool-season vegetables include many of the leafy-green vegetables such as cabbage, collards and spinach. Other cool-season vegetables include radish, beets and carrots. And there are others to consider.

Broccoli is an excellent crop for the home garden. General cultural practices are about the same as for cabbage. Broccoli and cabbage should be planted during August or the first of September.

Collards will withstand wide ranges of temperatures if properly conditioned. They may be direct seeded and thinned to cabbage spacing or plants may be set. Collards exceed cabbage, turnip greens and spinach in protein, fats and carbohydrates. Collards may be harvested by cutting the whole plant or by "cropping" individual leaves. Plant collards during August or first of September.

Onions are generally grown from sets or plants. Sets and plants will require about six to eight weeks to reach eating size. Bulbing onions will not be ready to harvest until spring. Sets and plants should be spaced about two inches apart. Plant onions September through December.

Radish is fun to grow and it is fast - being ready to harvest 25 to 30 days after planting.

Plant radish seeds September through mid-October.

Other cool season vegetables to try include: Beets, plant Aug. 1-Sept. 20; carrots, plant Aug. 20-Sept. 15; cauliflower, plant Aug. 15-Oct. 15; kale, plant Aug. 15-Oct. 15; lettuce, plant Sept. 1-Oct. 1; mustard, plant Aug. 20-Sept. 10; spinach, plant October-November; turnips plant Aug. 10-Oct. 1.

Preparation for a fall/winter garden is the same as for a spring/summer garden.

First you should choose a sunny location. Most vegetables perform poorly in shade. An area that receives at least eight hours of sunlight per day is best. Some vegetables such as broccoli, collards and spinach will tolerate partial shade. But vegetables do best where there is plenty of sunlight.

Locating the garden near the house will make it convenient in tending the garden and harvesting the vegetables. It also makes it easier to keep an eye out for pests, including insects, diseases and larger pests such as birds, squirrels and rabbits.

### **Plant Clinic**

A Plant Clinic to diagnose lawn, landscape and garden problems will be held August 27 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Fort Walton Beach at the Okaloosa County Extension building, 127 W. Hollywood Blvd.

To participate, bring a fresh sample of the weed, plant, insect, etc., that you'd like diagnosed. This may include a plant stem with several leaves, a 4-inch square of grass with roots attached, etc.

Larry Williams, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Okaloosa County, August 20, 2008