

Time for fall vegetable garden

Some gardeners quit with their gardens when the summer vegetables begin to die. But you can take advantage of the garden space by planting cool-season vegetables.

Cool-season vegetables include many of the leafy-green vegetables such as cabbage, collards and spinach. Other cool-season vegetables that you can enjoy include radish, beets and carrots. Let's take a closer look at some of the plants to be planted for the fall.

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. It should be ready to harvest 25 to 30 days after planting.

Plant radish seed 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.

If you did not prepare a garden earlier this year, you can prepare a garden spot for cool season vegetables. The preparation for a fall-season garden is the same as for an earlier garden.

Choose a sunny location. Most vegetables perform poorly in shade. Some vegetables such as broccoli, collards and spinach will tolerate partial shade. Avoid locating your garden near hedges or trees. They can create too much shade and their roots may compete with the garden for moisture and nutrients.

Locating your garden near the house makes it easier to watch for insect pests, disease, birds, squirrels, rabbits, etc. Tending and harvesting the garden will be more convenient, too.

Locate the garden near a water supply. You'll get only moderate results if you try to grow a garden without watering it as needed.

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