



Tips& Techniques: Planting Fall Crops

Have a few empty spaces in your garden plot, where maybe the cilantro went to seed, or the cucumbers succumbed to some combination of pests and disease? Maybe the drought wiped out all of your early crops, or you never got around to planting at all this year. In any case, if you've got a little space and inclination, there's still a little time left to sow some crops that will be ready to harvest in the fall!

Here are a few ideas:

1. Baby lettuce mix. There's no grocery store "baby mix" that can compare to the sweet & tender lettuce you grow in your own garden, and cut right before a meal. Lettuce loves cool weather, and fall lettuce crops develop beautiful deep color. They'll freeze in the first heavy frost (usually around mid-late October), but until then, expect to harvest some gorgeous salad.

Varieties to try:

- Johnny's Seeds: All Star, Encore, Wildfire
- High Mowing Seeds: Gourmet, Yankee Hardy
- Fedco Seeds: DeLuxe
- Make your own mix from leftover head lettuce seeds.

2. Spinach. Some varieties will overwinter – in this case, you'll have some very early spring greens on top of a fall harvest. Most spinach will last through some intense freezes. But only some will last the whole way through winter.

Varieties to try:

- Johnny's Seeds: Tyee
- High Mowing Seeds: Viroflay, (Tyee, Giant Winter)
- Fedco Seeds: Bloomsdale, Giant Winter, (Tyee)

3. Arugula. This crop will not last through a hard freeze. But it sprouts quickly and you can get a few salads before then! Any variety will do.

4. Asian greens. These salad greens, like arugula, sprout quickly and can get you at least a couple harvests before a heavy frost. They add variety and interest to a salad, or toss them into a soup

or stir fry.

Varieties

to try:

- Tat soi, Mizuna, Komatsuna, Hon Tsai Tsai, Mibuna

5. Turnips. Not exactly salivating at the thought of a few freshly grown turnips? Harvest these sweet little salad turnips around golf ball size and they will change your mind forever!

Varieties to try:

- Johnny's Seeds: Hakurei
- Fedco Seeds: Oasis

6. Kohlrabi. This oft-looked-over vegetable offers a lot more than you may expect. Crispy and sweet, it is lovely on crudité platters or accompanying a sandwich. There aren't that many varieties out there – try whichever looks appealing!

7. Radishes. These little beauties grow so quickly, there's still plenty of time to plant! Cool fall weather renders them sweeter and less bitter than radishes grown in the heat.

Varieties to try:

- Johnny's Seeds: Pink Beauty, D'Avignon, Easter Egg

8. Be sure to save room for garlic! It's not quite time to plant garlic yet, but it soon will be. November is a great month to plant garlic, so if you're interested in raising some of your own next year (it will actually be ready to harvest next July!), think about where it will go.

Tips for fall plantings:

- Check the "Days to Maturity" on your seed packets before planting (or before you order). This term refers to the amount of time it takes the crop to mature, from planting. In the fall, you will want to choose seeds with the shortest number of days to maturity possible.
- If you are ordering seeds online, check to see how many shipping days your order will take to arrive. At this point in the season, you will need your seeds sooner, rather than later!
- Check out this [Fall Planting Calculator](#), from Johnny's Seeds (scroll down the page to find the link). Put in the date that you think it will frost, in order to get a sense of when to plant which crop. (Try dates ranging from mid-late Oct. for the most accurate results).
- If you have a source of mulch (dried leaves or straw), plan to place it around your fall crops, once they have grown several inches tall. This will help protect them when it does frost.
- If you want to extend your season even longer, consider purchasing some [fabric row cover](#). We'll explain this more in a future post.

With the cooler mornings and evenings, this is a great time of year to get out in the garden. Happy planting!