Fall and Winter Gardening

Many crops can be grown in the fall and winter in the PNW

- Success is primarily about timing
- As you get practiced, you may choose not to grow some stuff in summer because you can have it in winter, etc.

Plan for space—look for microclimates that have:

- Sun
- Protection from the wind/early frost
- Good drainage
- Large stones that can hold heat during the day and release at night
- The right location—a few degrees can really matter in the winter, microclimates will vary throughout your yard

Difference between fall harvest, winter harvest and overwintering

- Fall harvest—eat Sept–Nov
- Winter harvest—eat throughout winter
- Overwintering—eat in early Spring

Planting in the heat of the summer can be hard on plants!

- Can put them in the shade until they are strong
- Transplant on a cool day, and provide shade after transplanting
- Mulching after planting will help conserve moisture and help get them established
- New starts and seeds may need water twice a day if planted during the height of summer
- As much sun as possible (sun is much lower in the autumn, so sunny summer places may be shaded out)

Mulch

- One of the simplest and most beneficial practices you can use in the garden
- Mulch is simply a protective layer of a material that is spread on top of the soil
- Mulches can either be organic—such as grass clippings, straw, bark chips and similar materials—or inorganic—such as stones, brick chips and plastic

Types of mulch

Anything that was once alive:

- Straw, leaves, grass clippings
- Newspaper
- Compost

Protecting ALL crops from the first light frost

- Use plastic, burlap, cardboard boxes, buckets or blankets
- Not meant to be permanent. Use in a pinch to get several more weeks out of planting

More permanent season extenders:

- Cold frames vs. Cloches/row covers
- Burlap filled with leaves
- Increases the amount of food that crops produce over the winter
- Protects crops that are "on the edge of their zone" so that they survive the season
- Protects crops both early and late in the year

Harvesting

Salad Greens

- Take the outer leaves, leaving the inside ones to keep growing (cut and come varieties)
- "Head" varieties like iceberg, romaine and cabbage: wait until the head is the appropriate size and then cut the whole thing off at the soil level. These will not regrow

Beets/Carrots

- Pull one out and look—you can eat the thinnings
- Can be left in the ground to overwinter, will get tougher and will start to grow hairs after Jan/Feb

Cucumbers/Zucchini/Summer Squash

- Harvest as soon as the fruit is visible. Bigger=Tougher
- Squash flowers are edible

Onions/shallots

- The top will begin to die—wait for the neck to collapse
- Storage: keep them in a cool dark place until the skins dry (can be three weeks)

Garlic

- Wait until at least 5 leaves have died
- Storage: same as onions (keep them in a cool dark place until the skins dry (can be three weeks)

Potatoes

- Early potatoes can be harvested when the potato begins to flower (fingerlings will be too small)
- Later taters when the whole plant dies
- Leave them in the ground to cure, or harvest and leave them in a cool, dark place to cure for storage

Broccoli/Cauliflower

- You are eating the bud—before it blooms
- Heads should be tight with no opening flowers
- Broccoli: if you cut the head with a knife, you will often get more shoots

Basil

- Pinch leaves off at tip to promote bushy growth
- Pinch off any flowers
- Once plants go to seed, the leaves become bitter

Tomatoes

- Blossom end should be firm but yielding
- You can bring in unripe tomatoes to ‘finish’ inside

Beans and Peas

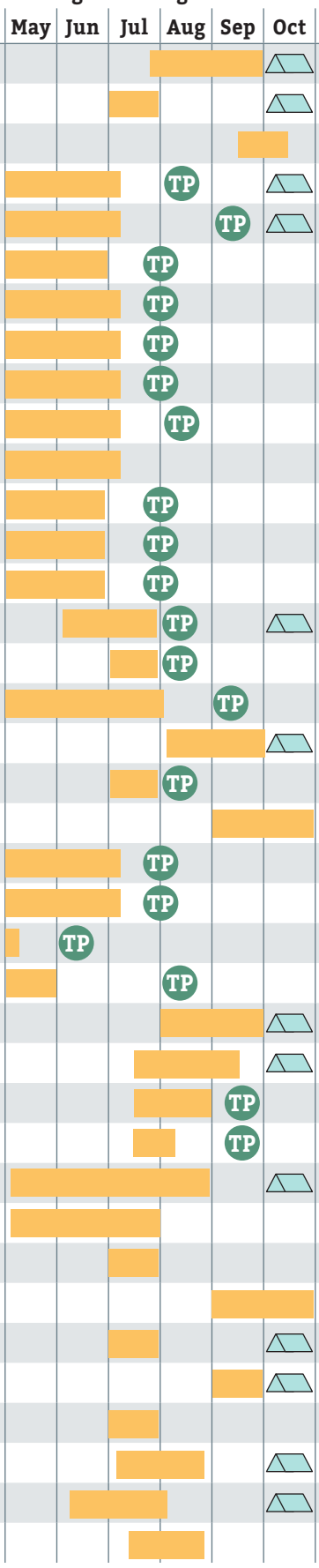
- Should be firm—taste to see your preference for size
- Dry beans can wait until plant is yellow and dead

Peppers

- Green peppers are just unripe peppers—you can eat them any time
- Flavor is usually better when they arrive at their color (but this can take a long time and doesn't always happen in the PNW)

Winter Gardening Chart

(Chart content from Territorial Seed Company)



Vegetable	Harvest	Storage Time (max)	Storage Temp	Storage Humidity	Freeze Out Temp
Arugula	Winter–Spring	1 week	34–40°F	90–95%	5–10°F
Beets	All Winter	4–5 months	34–40°F	90–95%	15–20°F
Beans, Fava	Spring–Summer		34–40°F	Dry	10–20°F
Broccoli—*autumn*	Autumn	2 weeks	34–40°F	90–95%	Before first frost
Broccoli—*sprouting*	Spring	2 weeks	34–40°F	90–95%	15–20°F
Brussels Sprouts—*autumn*	Autumn	3–5 weeks	34–40°F	90–95%	After first frost
Brussels Sprouts—*winter*	Winter	3–5 weeks	34–40°F	90–95%	After first frost
Cabbage—*late summer*	Late Summer	3–6 weeks	34–40°F	80–90%	Before first frost
Cabbage—*autumn/winter*	Autumn–Winter	5–6 months	34–40°F	80–90%	Before first frost
Cabbage—*winter*	Winter		34–40°F	80–90%	Before first frost
Carrots	Winter–Spring	4–5 months	34–40°F	90–95%	5°F
Cauliflower—*summer*	Late Summer	3–4 weeks	34–40°F	90–95%	10–15°F
Cauliflower—*autumn*	Autumn	3–4 weeks	34–40°F	90–95%	10–15°F
Cauliflower—*spring*	Spring	3–4 weeks	34–40°F	90–95%	10–15°F
Chicory	Winter	2 weeks	34–40°F	90–95%	Before first frost
Chinese Cabbage (Napa)	Late Autumn	2–3 weeks	34–40°F	90–95%	20°F
Collards	Winter–Spring	1 week	33–40°F	90–95%	5–10°F
Corn Salad (Mache)	Spring	1 week	35–40°F	90–95%	5°F
Fennel	Autumn–Spring	2–3 weeks	33–40°F	90–95%	Before first frost
Garlic & Shallot Bulbs	Summer	5–8 months	34–40°F	60–70%	15°F
Kale	Winter–Spring	2–3 weeks	34–40°F	90–95%	5–10°F
Kohlrabi	Winter–Spring	2–3 weeks	33–40°F	90–95%	5°F
Leeks—*autumn*	Autumn–Winter	8 weeks	34–50°F	90–95%	5°F
Leeks—*winter*	Winter–Spring	8 weeks	34–50°F	90–95%	5°F
Lettuce	Autumn–Winter	2 weeks	33–40°F	90–95%	5–10°F
Mustard Greens	Winter	2 weeks	33–40°F	90–95%	5°F
Onion—*bunching*	Winter–Spring	3 weeks	33–40°F	90–95%	5–10°F
Onion—*overwintering*	Spring–Summer	4–8 months	55–65°F	60–70%	5–10°F
Parsley Root	Winter	8–10 weeks	33–40°F	90–95%	0°F
Parsnips	Winter	4–6 months	34–40°F	90–95%	5°F
Peas—*autumn*	Autumn	2 weeks	33–40°F	90–95%	15°F
Peas—*overwintering*	Spring	2 weeks	33–40°F	90–95%	15°F
Radicchio	Autumn–Winter	3–4 weeks	33–40°F	90–95%	15–20°F
Radishes	Winter–Spring	2–4 months	33–40°F	90–95%	15–20°F
Rutabagas	Winter–Spring	4–6 months	33–40°F	90–95%	20°F
Spinach	Autumn–Winter	1–2 weeks	33–40°F	90–95%	5–10°F
Swiss Chard	Autumn–Winter	1–2 weeks	33–40°F	90–95%	5°F
Turnips	Winter–Spring	4–5 months	34–40°F	90–95%	20°F

Sow seeds TP Transplant Cover or cloche to lengthen harvest