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virginia home food production



FACT SHEET

DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE

September, 1979

MH 334

FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING

By planting a fall vegetable garden you may have fresh vegetables up to and even past the first frosts.

Succession plantings of warm season crops (such as corn and beans) can be harvested up until the first killing frost. Other cool season crops (such as kale, turnips, mustard, broccoli, cabbage, etc.) grow well during the cool fall days and withstand light frosts. Timely planting is a key to a successful fall garden.

To determine the time to plant a particular vegetable for the latest harvest in your area, you need to know the average first date of killing frost (see map below) and the number of days to maturity for the variety you are growing. Subtracting the number of days to maturity from the date of killing frost will give the last date to plant. Since crop maturity is slower in the cool temperature of fall and frost could come early, it is wise to allow two additional weeks in figuring a final planting date.

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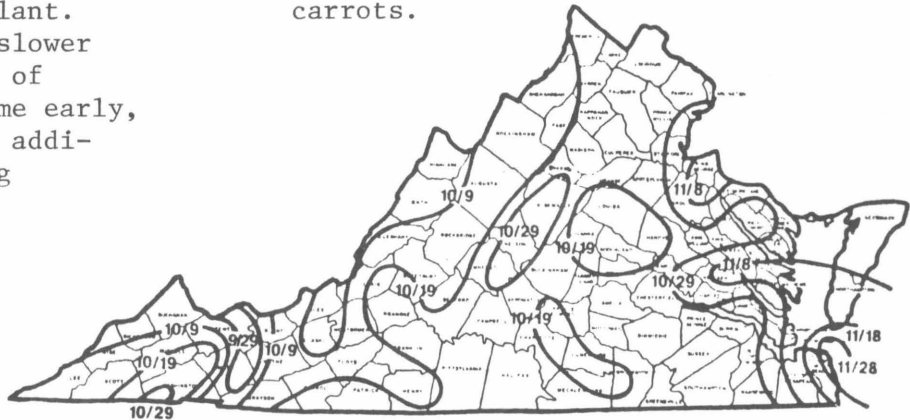
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Remember to restore some fertility to the soil before planting your fall crops by working in a light layer of compost or aged manure or a small application of a complete chemical fertilizer.

Dry soil may present a problem with getting a uniform germination from seeds during the midsummer period. Plant your fall vegetables when the soil is moist after a rain or water the area thoroughly the day before you plant. Cover your seeds about twice as deeply as you did last spring.

Young plants will also have a need for sufficient moisture. Irrigate when necessary and prevent weed growth by cultivation and mulching.

Some of the best quality vegetables are produced during the warm days and cool nights of the fall season. These environmental conditions add sugar to sweet corn and crispness to carrots.



The following chart gives suggestions for some of the vegetables that can be expected to produce well in Virginia.

VEGETABLES FOR THE FALL GARDEN

Vegetable	Days to Maturity	Latest Average Planting Date ¹	Weeks Before aver. date of 1st killing frost
Bean, Bush Snap	55-70	July 1 - Aug. 1	8-12
Beets	60-80	July 10 - Aug. 10	8-12
² Broccoli	55-70**	July 15 - Aug 15	10-16 (seed)
² Brussels Sprouts	80-95**	July 1 - 31	12-18 (seed)
² Cabbage	65-90**	July 10 - Aug 15	10-16 (seed)
Cabbage, Chinese	60-75	July 10 - Aug 10	8-12
Carrots	60-80	July 10 - Aug 1	8-12
² Cauliflower	55-70**	July 10 - Aug 20	10-16 (seed)
Chard, Swiss	60-80	July 10 - Aug 10	6-12
² Collards	80-90	July 10 - Aug 15	8-12
Corn, Sweet	70-85	July 1 - Aug 1	8-12
Cucumbers	55-70	July 1 - Aug 1	8-12
² Endive	65-80	July 10 - Aug 15	8-12
² Kale	55-75	July 10 - Aug 15	8-12
² Kohlrabi	60-70	July 10 - Aug 10	8-12
² Lettuce:			
Butterhead	65-80	Aug 1 - 15	8-10
Looseleaf	45-60	July 15 - Aug 20	8-12
Peas	65-90	July 25 - Aug 5	9-11
Radishes	25-45	Aug 15 - Sept. 15	4-8
Spinach	40-60	Aug 1 - Aug 25	6-8
Summer Squash	55-70	July 1 - Aug 1	8-12
Turnips	45-60	July 15 - Aug 25	6-8

¹Select only the earliest maturing varieties for planting at these dates. Dates are approximations based on the average date of earliest killing frost in the fall for the state of Virginia.

²Can be sown in boxes or flats or beds for transplanting.

**Days to maturity from time transplants are set in the garden.

Sow a cover crop of annual winter rye in unplanted areas and after harvesting of fall crops. Seed at the rate of 5 lbs. per 1000 square feet.

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