

Grow Winter Vegetables!

How many of us would enjoy fresh garden vegetables in the winter? Some of the hard to grow vegetables are often the same ones that struggle to survive in the summer. Could it be that cool weather varieties are typically planted at less than optimal times? A tormented (or bolting) cabbage plant could simply be begging for cooler weather. Spinach as well as many other cool weather plants (see chart below) do well when they are planted at specific times in respect to the plant species, and season relative to our environment. When cool weather vegetables are not growing during their preferred times, quality and production may be affected.

It is useful to know that mild winters give us great gardening potential. Learn to identify your cool weather vegetables and some disease resistant varieties. Unless you are intrigued by the unknown or enjoy risk, choose a proven variety that has been tested in your local. Be aware that highly rated vegetable varieties that produce well in Vermont or Florida might do poorly here. Additionally, keep track of your gardening results; you are the final authority on what grows easily in your environment and tastes good.

So, what kind of planning is required to grow cool weather vegetables? Apart from preparing the soil, choose the variety of vegetable and the time you plant, carefully. Some winter or cool weather species can be planted as early as July or August—other recommended times might be January. University of California approved varieties for San Joaquin Valley are listed below. The recommended planting times are in brackets.

The guide below is a quick reference. The research has already been done for you. This can be helpful in saving you, the gardener, time and distress. It can improve your harvest, which, as any true gardener knows, can have a positive affect on your life.

Suggested (tested) varieties for Fall and Winter Crops in San Joaquin Valley. This modified guide is provided by University of California Cooperative Extension, Fresno. The complete guide is available at low cost through your local Agricultural Extension office. Free classes on Winter Gardening are offered periodically through the Ag-Extension and held at the Garden of the Sun, Fresno.

Snap Beans (Aug, Sept)

Bush: Contender, Harvester, Roman, Tendercrop

Pole: Kentucky Wonder, Romano, Scarlet Runner

Beets (Feb, Mar)

Ruby Queen, Detroit Dk Red, Little Ball, Early Wonder, Burpee's Golden Beet

Carrots (Aug, Sept)

Baby: Short n'Sweet, Little Finger, Lady Finger, Amsterdam

Elevated Vit. A: A-Plus Hybrid, Vitasweet group

Long Tapered (for deep soil) Gold Pak 28, Emperor, Danvers

Medium Long: Nantes, Chanternay, Danvers-half long

Chard (Jul, Aug, Sept)

Fordhook Giant, Lucullus, Rhubarb Chard, Ruby

Chives (Feb, Mar)

no names or varieties available

Endive (Aug,Sept)

Full Heart Batavian, Lg Green Curled

Garlic (Oct-Dec)

California Late, California Early

Kale (Aug, Sept)

Vates Dwarf, Blue Curled, Salad Savoy, Ornamental

Kohlrabi (Aug, Sept)

Grand Duke, Early White Vienna, Purple Vienna

Leeks (Jan - Apr)

Lg American Flag, Electra, Titian

Lettuce (Aug,Sept)

Butterhead: Buttercrunch, Dk Gn Boston, Summer Bibb

Romaine: Parris Island, Valmaine

Iceberg: Difficult to grow and not recommended for the home garden.

Looseleaf: Salad Bowl, Oak Leaf, Gn Ice, Red Sails, Ruby

Onions (bulb) Plant early varieties from Nov - Jan for late spring or summer harvest

Fiesta, Yellow Sweet Spanish, White Sweet Spanish, Southport Globe (red or wh)

Stockton Yellow Globe

Peas (Sept-Jan)

China, snow or surar: Dwarf Grey Sugar, Mammoth Melting Sugar

Green Garden: Freezonian, Green Arrow, Maestro

Snap: Sugar Ann (dwarf) Sweet Snap (semi-dwarf), Sugar Rae (dwarf)

and Sugar Daddy (stringless, dwarf), Sugar Snap

White Potatoes (Jan-Mar)

White Rose, Kennebec, Chieftain, Norgold Russet, Red Lasoda

Radish (Sept-Apr)

Cherry Belle, Champion, Scarlet Knight

White: April Cross, Icicle, Snowbelle

Rutabaga (Dec-Feb)

American Purple Top

