



## SOW SEEDS NOW FOR AN EASY AND DELICIOUS FALL GARDEN

Mid to late summer is the ideal time to start your fall garden. In most areas of the country, you can grow a “second season” crop of your favorite cool-season vegetables and lovely fall flowers. In mild winter areas, you can grow even more garden favorites for harvest in late fall, winter, even into next spring. Now is the time to gear up for some of the best growing weather of the year, which lies in the cool weather ahead.

### What to Grow

Many casual gardeners don't bother to plant later in the summer because they think of a garden as something to be planted in spring. The HGSA is out to change that mindset, along with the idea that growing plants from seed is difficult. The HGSA has found that “fear of failure” is the primary reason many home gardeners do not garden with seed, and it wants to forever dispel that fear. To help gardeners gain confidence with seeds, the HGSA has assembled a list of the Top Ten Fall Varieties that are easy and fun to grow from seed.

Even where winters are cold and the ground freezes hard, many vegetables can still be grown to maturity before the first frost. In addition to the Top Ten (listed right), try broccoli, carrots, cabbage, and arugula. When choosing varieties, select ones that are fast-maturing to insure a harvest before the cold weather hits. Consider extending your planting season even more by growing crops under cold frames and row covers. Now is also a good time to start seeds of many flowering perennials. Sown in fall, many will be ready to start flowering by the following spring or summer.

#### Top Ten Fall Varieties to Grow from Seed



Read more about these varieties  
at: [www.ezfromseed.org](http://www.ezfromseed.org)



In mild winter areas, you can grow an even wider selection of fall and winter crops, including onions, leeks, and parsley. Seeds of annual flowers that thrive in cool weather can also be sown now for fall and spring bloom, including alyssum, candytuft, calendula, stock, and sweet peas.

## When to Start

The key to growing vegetables for fall harvest is timing. Vegetables grown in this season need about 14 extra days to mature compared with spring-seeded crops due to fall's shorter days, cooling soil, and less intense sunshine. When deciding the date to start your veggies, first determine your average first frost date. Check with a good, independent garden center. Then look at the seed packet for days to maturity. Add 14 days to that number, then use that figure to calculate back to seed-starting date.

## Growing On

Remember that sowing seeds or setting out transplants in midsummer can be more stressful to young plants than seeding during cooler, often wetter spring weather. Be sure to keep the soil moist as seeds are germinating. Protect young seedlings with shade cloth or plant them near taller plants, such as corn or tomatoes to provide shade from the hot afternoon sun. Another option is to start seeds in containers in a spot with bright light and then transplant young seedlings into the garden. This works well for crops like lettuce and spinach, whose seeds don't germinate as well when soil temperatures are high.

## Fall Harvest

With a little effort in late summer, you'll have a splendid harvest of vegetables in fall. Cool weather-loving crops, such as kale, lettuce, spinach, and broccoli, will thrive in the lower autumn temperatures.



*The EZfromSEED Web site shows you everything you need to know about growing plants from seed. It's brought to you by the Home Garden Seed Association (HGSA), an international group of seed producers and seed packet companies committed to supporting home gardening success, specifically through the use of seeds.*