

Fall Vegetable Garden Planning

What You Should Be Doing To Prepare!

Some of the best quality garden vegetables in Oklahoma are produced and harvested during the fall season when warm, sunny days are followed by cool, humid nights. Under these conditions, plant soil metabolism is low. Therefore, more of the food manufactured by the plant becomes a high quality vegetable product.

Here are the steps to get ready....

1 Prepare your soil

There is no need to strenuously till vegetable beds that have had summer crops growing in them before planting fall crops, but it helps to fork the soil lightly to loosen the top 2-3" inches of soil, which may have become compacted over the course of the growing season. Use a trowel to loosen the soil for each seedling to a depth of 4-5 inches. 1-2 pounds of actual nitrogen per 100 square feet is recommended. Do not apply any phosphorus-containing fertilizer unless a soil test calls for it because a garden that has been previously fertilized almost never needs it. Thoroughly mix the fertilizer with the soil.

2 Weed control

Remove all weeds and roots from the bed, preferably by hand. Alternatively, Roundup may be used to eliminate weeds. Vegetable plants and/or seeds can then be safely planted four days after using Roundup.

3 Mulch

Apply mulch up to 2 weeks before planting, allowing the soil underneath to cool slightly. The mulch can be pulled back for seeding or transplanting later.

4 Determine which fall vegetables you want to enjoy

The three main types of vegetables that will do well in a fall in Oklahoma gardens are:

- Leafy salad greens
- Root vegetables
- Brassicas (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, etc)

Lettuces, spinach, arugula, Swiss chard, Asian greens, collards, beets, carrots, turnips, radishes, some onions, chicories, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, broccoli, leeks, and other related vegetables do well in fall planting.



5 Insect and Disease Management

By mid-summer, many insects can be feeding in your garden. Regular spray of the bacteria *Bacillus thuringiensis*, commonly called Bt, applied according to label instructions, can keep the caterpillars in check. Bt kills only the larvae form of the intended pest and is safe on food crops. It will also kill butterfly larvae, so use only on undesirable caterpillars.



6 Sow Your Seeds

It's easiest to start fall crops in flats rather than sow the seeds directly in the ground, so you can start them in a partially shaded area outdoors or in a sunny window indoors. The seedbed needs to remain evenly moist for germination to occur,

which may require watering several times a day if temperatures are in the 90s.

Once your plants have two “true” leaves, which look more like the leaves on a mature plant, they’re ready to be planted.

For more information, please refer to the following OSU Fact Sheets:

[HLA-6009 Fall Gardening](#)

[HLA-6005 Mulching Vegetable Garden Soils](#)

[HLA-6007 Improving Garden Soil Fertility](#)

[EPP-7313 Home Garden Insect Control](#)