

WINTER GARDENING

Gardening does not have to end after the first frost. A cool-weather garden, carefully planned and managed, can extend your harvest well into colder temperatures.

Cool-hardy vegetables can survive a hard frost; in fact, some varieties can tolerate temperatures in the teens or below. These vegetables must be started from seed from mid to late summer in order to be harvested in the winter. The seeds can germinate while the weather is warm and the days are longer, will give the resulting seedlings time to develop and mature by the time winter arrives. Another option is to buy starter plants from a nursery and transplant them into your garden in early fall.

Before planting anew, compost anything left over from the summer garden. Work 1" - 3" of seasoned compost into the garden bed. Slope the garden bed north to south a few inches, as this will help the bed to absorb the warm sun.

Collard, kale, and spinach must be planted six to eight weeks before first frost; once established they can withstand temperatures down to 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Surprisingly, the effect of frost improves their flavor, making them sweeter as the temperature falls.

Carrots produce more sugar in colder weather, which in turn protects the roots from freezing and enables them to tolerate lower temperatures.

Fava beans can survive temperatures to 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Enjoy eating the leaves, flowers, and pods throughout the winter after they have matured.

Planting the right vegetables at the right time and in the right way will provide a cold-weather harvest that you can enjoy throughout the winter months.

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Winter Gardening; <https://www.oeffa.org/tips.php?sjt=winter>

Explore More Gardening; <https://gilmour.com>

How to Plant Cold Weather Vegetables; SFGATE Home Guides; <https://homeguides.sfgate.com>