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July 18, 2010

## **Sow Seeds for the Fall**

For many of you, we are finally beginning to harvest produce from the garden and although the heat and lack of water are causing much concern for our plants, we are enjoying the reward that goes with our labor. Congratulations on your accomplishments.

Whether you are riding high from what you are currently harvesting or scratching your head in disbelief at what the heat has done to your garden, now is the time to think about the future. The next week of July is a great time to prepare and implement the beginnings of your fall garden.

If you have never taken the opportunity to put in a fall garden you may not believe that in the middle of our current hot weather trend is the best time to be sowing seeds for fall, but that is in fact the case.

If you have spaces in your garden where you no longer have plants growing, till the area and prepare a good seed bed. You may find that you have weeds taking over a portion of your vegetable patch or an unused space in your yard. Take back your space and use these areas to start your fall garden.

Before you plant, think about what you will be growing and where it should go. Remember to plant varieties in locations where they have not been planted recently. If a particular vegetable, say lettuce, was planted in the spring then plant it in a different location for this fall.

Plant like-minded vegetables together. For example, long-term, frost tolerant vegetables should be together as they will last an equivalent amount of time. Frost-tolerant vegetables include beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, collards, garlic, kale, lettuce, mustard, onions, parsley, spinach and turnips.

If you plan to leave varieties in the ground through the winter then place those plants in the same location. For example, onions, garlic, leeks and spinach can be left all winter to be harvested in spring.

If you want to get in a quick harvest of several types of beans then plant different bean varieties in the same location. Once they are spent you can rework the soil with a cover crop to prepare for next spring.

Remember to keep your newly planted seeds moist so that they will germinate. Once they do you will need to ensure they receive water until they are mature enough to withstand periods without water. Hopefully by then we will be getting more moisture in our weather.

Of course the hardest part about doing a fall garden is finding the starts to get the project underway. That is why most things will be started from seed. Search out garden supply centers, farm supply stores and hardware stores to see if they have any seeds left for planting. Beyond that you might try Johnny's Selected Seeds, Gurney's Seed, Stokes Seed or Baker Creek Heirloom Seed as sources.

Above all, don't be afraid to try it. While it may be hot now, it won't be long until we have cooler weather and that is a great time to be out in the garden looking after your newly produced vegetables.

*Helpful Publication: Lewis Jett. Vegetable Planting Calendar G6201. University of Missouri Extension. Rev. May 2003.*

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