



## The Fall Vegetable Garden

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### What is the Fall Season?

Fall in the SF Bay Area is the “Secret” Season for planting vegetables that thrive in cooler weather and that generally do not make fruit. Much of the Bay Area mimics the coastal environment during September, October and November, making it a good time to plant the Brassicas or Mustard Family crops, as well as peas, carrots, root crops, and leafy greens. Many of our favorite herbs thrive during this season as well.

#### ● Soil Preparation

- Rebuild the soil with compost and manure and to spread some balanced fertilizer for the Fall crop. (Particularly if planting after a summer crop of tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, etc. that require a lot of nutrients to make their fruit).
- Vegetables and herbs can be grown in containers.
  - Potting soil and fertilizer recommendation

#### ● Brassicas

- Brassicas are members of the Mustard Family (aka “Cabbage Family”).
  - Broccoli, Cauliflower, Collards, Kale, Brussels Sprouts, Kohlrabi, Mizuna, and various Mustards.
- Prefer cooler weather and can tolerate cool nights.
- They are all the same plant botanically speaking, but have been chosen by humans for certain characteristics
  - Ie: green buds of Broccoli or the white buds of Cauliflower.
- Some, like Kale, can grow well in the Summer, but most prefer our Fall through Spring weather.
- Rich in nutrition
- Need a well-drained, rich soil.
- Will not grow well where there is standing water after a rain.
- Need full sun to thrive through the later Fall months.

#### ● Kale

- Can be grown year-round.
- 18” spacing between plants.
- Favorites
  - Toscano (also known as Dinosaur or Lacinato)
  - Red Russian
  - Blue Vates (sometimes called a Collard.)

- **Broccoli**
  - Plant in August and September and again in the early to mid-Spring
    - Do not plant in the late Spring or Summer.
  - Many varieties: primary difference being how long they take to make the buds.
    - ‘Early’ varieties for a late Fall crop
    - “Overwintering” varieties to plant now for a Spring crop.
- **Brussels Sprouts**
  - Large, strong plants that produce prolifically
    - Slice in half and sauté their “little cabbages” in butter/olive oil and lemon.
    - Developed to lose the bitterness they once were known for.
  - Plant now for a crop that will mature toward Christmas.
    - Most varieties take about 100 days to mature
- **Leafy greens**
  - Plant in Fall to grow through Winter: Lettuces, Kale, Swiss Chard, Mizuna, Mustards.
- **Peas**
  - Plant both Snap Peas and Sugar peas now for a Fall/Winter/Spring crop.
    - Tall vining varieties will need support
    - Short bushy varieties.
- **Root crops**
  - Plant carrots, beets, and turnips now to harvest before winter.
  - Beets and Swiss Chard are the same plant.
- **Hardy herbs**
  - Sage, Parsley, Cilantro, Chives, Rosemary, Thyme, Oregano, and Mint can grow through our winters.
  - Mint needs its own container
  - Combine
    - More water-hungry herbs like parsley and cilantro together
    - Woody more drought tolerant herbs like Rosemary, Sage and Thyme together

**References:**

Pam Pierce, Golden Gate Gardening 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2010 Sasquatch Books, Seattle  
[www.sloatgardens.com/learn](http://www.sloatgardens.com/learn)

