

## Extension Corner

Written by Lisa Brewer

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Do you like cabbage or broccoli? How about spinach? These are just a few of the cool season crops you can grow in your garden, if you are not too tired from growing all the cool season crops in spring and then the warm season crops in summer.

If you don't do well with growing the cool season crops in the spring, what would be the point of doing it again in the fall? Here are few things to consider:

—temperatures are more tolerable.

—fewer pests.

—frost enhances the flavor.

—frost increases the sweetness of the kale and collards.

—less weeds.

Overall, fall garden is much easier and less effort. So start sowing the seed! Here is a list of crops to try: broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, spinach, kale, collards, lettuce, spinach, escarole, endive, brussel sprouts, leeks, oriental vegetables, garlic, arugula, mustard, turnips, kohlrabi and rutabaga.

Be sure to check on the final hard frost and count back 8-12 weeks. This will give you 56-84 days or so. With broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and brussel sprouts it is best to start with transplants. These crops are referred to as cole crops or crops in the Cruciferae family. This also includes mustard. Most recently, the family is now referred to as the Brassicaceae family. All the flowers of these plants have the same flower parts. Think of it this way. All the flowers in the pea family have the same parts whether the flowers are on an edible pea or a sweet pea flower

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or another member of the family.

For broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, kolhrabi and kale, start the seeds in mid-July. Use starter fertilizer on the transplants. This can increase your yields by 20 percent. The preferred growing temperatures are 60-70 degrees. In a more mature stage, broccoli and cauliflower can tolerate some frost.

All the cole crops are intolerant of dry soils. They are shallow rooted and like moist, well-drained soil. If the soil dries quickly, these crops can acquire a stronger flavor.

Unless the snow in northeastern Colorado comes early, fall crops can bring you a great harvest. With garlic, leeks and spinach, these crops can winter over. Brussel sprouts can produce a harvest into December.

The oriental vegetables are similar to the cole crops in their cultural practices. It is recommended to side dress with calcium nitrate three weeks after planting at a rate of 1.5-3 lbs per 100 foot row. For any of the root crops listed, side-dress with ammonium nitrate for 30 days prior to harvest. Before preparing the planting area, the best recommendation is to have your soil tested. Then you have a baseline. You can make more accurate adjustments.

Happy fall gardening! Be sure to contact your local extension agent, if you need more information or have any questions.

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