

Winter Vegetable Planting

Winter is a good time to start planning your vegetable plantings. Think of the planning stage as very important!! Organize vegetables by seed starting dates for the transplants, then transplanting dates or by direct seeding dates. Many cool-season vegetable transplants are ready to plant 6 weeks from seeding.

Asparagus crowns are one of the first vegetables to go into the soil. Plant the 1-year-old crowns at the bottom of a 6-9 inch furrow but only cover with 1 to 2 inches of soil at planting. As the asparagus grows continue to slowly add more soil until the trench is filled.

Onions can be planted in January and February when the soil conditions are favorable. Onion transplants do best for growing large, sweet dry bulb onions. Green or bunch onions can be grown by planting sets or direct seeding.

Head and leaf lettuce transplants can be planted starting in February. Be sure and harden off the lettuce transplants. Once planted lettuce is usually very tolerant of temperatures down to 20-25 F. Direct seeded lettuce needs to be sown very shallow, even leaving some seed uncovered.

Garden peas and peas planted for the edible pods can be planted in cool weather and tolerate frost well.

Many gardeners like to plant carrots in the winter but be careful as small carrot seedlings cannot handle hard freezes. Carrots are fairly tolerant of frost. Carrots seedlings with less than six leaves and a root less than 1 inch in diameter are more susceptible to cold injury. Optimal soil temperatures should be above 40 F.

Get ready to plant many other cool season vegetables starting late February/ March such as horseradish, rhubarb, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, turnips, leeks, collards, cabbage, and potatoes,. Also windbreaks, mulches, row covers, and high tunnels can be used to increase success of early vegetables.