

Plant Wise

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

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Fall Garden Vegetables

If you enjoy gardening, you will find success growing vegetables that enjoy the cooler, shorter days of fall, like leafy greens, root vegetables, cabbage, broccoli, and kale.

In order to ensure your fall garden matures before the first frost, get it started in mid-summer (typically late July to early August). There are tons of plants that will grow well in cool weather, but many need to be started while it's still a bit warm outside and the days are longer. You can plant as space is freed up in your summer vegetable garden. Here are some tips and 14 vegetables perfect for your fall garden.



Planting

Plant your seeds deeper in the fall than in the spring. Typically, the ground is warmer having just come off the hot summer months. By planting your seeds a little deeper than the package suggests, you'll be able to get them down to where the soil is cool and moist.

Beets

Although beets will still grow in the summer heat, they can have a tendency to get bitter and woody quickly, so late summer to early fall is the best time to plant. Beet bulbs will keep growing until a deep freeze, and even the tops can handle a bit of frost.

Bok Choy (Brassica rapa)

Bok choy is well-suited to fall planting. "Baby" bok choy varieties grow quickly, reaching about eight inches in height in around 40 days. They like the

cool weather fall brings, as well as the decrease in leaf insects. Bok Choy will not bolt to seed as quickly as they might in warm spring weather, you can harvest the heads as you need them.

Broccoli

Broccoli, like other cole crops, grows best in cool weather. Fall planting has two big advantages over spring planting when it comes to broccoli. First, although established broccoli plants can tolerate frost, tender broccoli seedlings are not as hardy and early spring frosts can shock or even kill them. Additionally, since the florets are flower buds, they will open more slowly in cool weather, giving you more time to harvest. Keep in mind, broccoli does take several months to mature, so transplant a quick-grower, like Waltham, in mid-to-late summer for a timely fall harvest.

Green Beans

There are two different types of green beans. Pole beans need a long growing season, allowing the vines to reach a mature height before they start setting beans. Bush varieties, on the other hand, will start producing in as little as 45 days, making them excellent candidates for a fall crop of beans. Bean plants are too tender to handle frost, so if an early frost threatens, place a cover over them until the temperatures climb again.

Cabbage

Fall is the perfect growing weather for cabbage. While plants can grow in warmer weather, they need cooler temperatures in order to form a head. Cabbage needs anywhere from 90–120 days to mature, so a fall crop would have to be a transplant seedlings in mid-to-late summer. Most cabbage is hardy enough to handle a light frost so, with some protection, you can harvest them well into late fall. Cabbage tends to get sweeter in the cooler weather.

Carrots

Carrots are not the quickest growers, but some of the smaller varieties, like Thumbelina and Paris

Market, will mature in about 50 days.

Cauliflower

Fall is typically a better time to grow cauliflower than in the spring, as the cool weather keeps the heads tight and tender. Cauliflower is a slow grower, often taking between two and three months to mature depending on the varietal, so it also needs to be a transplant. Keep in mind that cauliflower can only handle a mild frost, so you'll want to plant in time for a mid-fall harvest.

Kale

Kale is probably the easiest cole crop to grow. The seeds germinate in warm or cool soil and it's grown for its leaves, so you don't have to worry about a head forming or the flowers bolting. The advantage of growing kale in the fall is the magic that happens to so many vegetables that are grown in cool weather or hit by a light frost—the leaves will still have a great texture and the flavor will sweeten and deepen. Start seeds for fall harvesting in mid-to-late summer or transplant in late summer.



Lettuce

Lettuce can be planted pretty much all season. Most varieties take less than 50 days to mature, so you can start planting seed in mid-August and succession plant into the fall months. The plants may grow more slowly than in the spring due to shorter days and lower temperatures, but the flavor will be sweeter and crisper. Because lettuce has shallow roots, it will require some protection against frost. If you plant your fall lettuce in pots, it's very easy to move it indoors to protect it from freezing temperatures, otherwise, you can cover it with burlap or another netting if frost is expected.

Peas

Peas are another vegetable that loves to luxuriate in cool weather. Many short varieties will be ready to harvest within 50 to 60 days. Plant them in mid-to-late August. Pea seeds will germinate more quickly in warm weather, but they will also need more water and a little protection from the strong sun while they are young. By the time they are ready to start flowering and forming peas, the days

and nights should be the perfect temperature in fall to keep them going.

Radishes

Radishes grow quickly in cool, moist soil. Most of the problems associated with growing radishes in the spring (like a woody texture, hot or bitter taste, and small size) will be alleviated by sowing them in the fall instead.

Spinach

If you've been frustrated by your summer spinach bolting before it's even large enough to eat, you are going to love growing it in the fall. Spinach only takes about 30 to 40 days to mature, so you can get in several successions of spinach throughout the fall months.



Swiss Chard

If you've already been harvesting your swiss chard as cut-and-come-again, you won't even have to reseed it for fall. The plants have probably slowed down a bit during summer, but with a little cool air and water, they'll ramp back into full production come fall. Otherwise, you can sow seed now for fresh chard.

Turnips

Turnips are a root vegetable, meaning they need a long season (100 or more days) to mature. However, they grow the largest and most flavorful if they're allowed to mature in the fall. Since they're grown for their roots and their tops are fairly hardy, it doesn't matter too much if they get hit by frost, they may even end up tasting sweeter.



Do you have Native Plants?



Native plants are the species which have been part

of the balance of nature developed over thousands of years in a particular ecosystem or region. While a native species may range widely across the country, local populations often exhibit differences adapted to their local environment.



Native plants are at the base of the wild food chain. They have co-evolved with native insects, developing mutually dependent interactions and relationships, such as pollination and reproduction. Butterfly gardeners know they must put up with caterpillars, the larval form of the butterflies, eating their plants. This insect-host plant relationship is often more specialized and vital than many people realize. Most butterflies and moths, in their larval stages, feed predominantly on native plants, often just a few species. If those plants are not available, the butterfly or moth cannot reproduce. The monarch butterfly struggles in part because although its larvae can feed on any milkweed plant species, loss of native habitat has resulted fewer milkweed plants.



Beyond butterflies, caterpillars are essential, protein-rich food for birds. We know that 96% of our land birds feed their babies exclusively with insects, mostly caterpillars. No caterpillars, no baby birds! With native plants, every gardener can plant critical habitat for local insects and birds. As people continue to convert more land to urban areas, gardens and landscapes will become ever more important to sustaining wildlife.

Native plants are the ultimate low-maintenance option that is a perfect fit for the time-sensitive gardener. They have very few gardening needs and are perfectly happy in full sun with little to no additional water. Not only are they drought- and heat-tolerant, but they'll even thrive on a little bit of neglect. A garden with native plants offers a stunning variety of natural colors that essentially take care of themselves, year after year. These pretty locals will be a favorite of guests to your garden, from visiting pollinators and birds to your friends and family.



Butterfly Milkweed

Don't let the name fool you, because Milkweed (also known as Butterfly Weed) is a charming flower that adds to its beauty by attracting scores of butterflies. It's mainly known as the flower of Monarch butterflies, but their nectar is also a favorite of ladybeetles and bees. The pretty clusters of flowers will help to draw scores of beneficial insects to your garden, but will also repel destructive pests like deer and rabbits. This flower works hard for you and is frequently available in delicate shades of orange or pink to dress up your low-maintenance garden. Unlike its counterpart, common milkweed, it will not spread.



Coneflowers

These flowers feature a seed head with long, falling petals that cascade in a cone shape. Also known as Echinacea, these flowers offer many color options beyond their classic purple hues. The unique shape of these flowers is eye-catching to

the passerby as well as to helpful insects and local birds. The blooms seem to last forever, making a summer long show of color.



Yarrow

Also known as Achillea, Yarrow is another example of a vibrant native plant. While the colorful clusters of flowers make this perennial incredibly popular, the leaves add functionality as a long-loved herb. Many gardeners swear on Yarrow leaves' pain-relieving ability and have used them for a variety of common ailments from toothaches to bellyaches. A bit of Yarrow in the garden adds a splash of color, all while requiring minimal care. In fact, a little neglect actually helps this plant to thrive.



Ironweed

This native is as tough as the name suggests. Ironweed is a perfect plant for the middle or back of the garden, maturing at a height of about a foot and a half tall. The blooms are what makes this plant so spectacular. Vibrant, dark purple flowers cover the tips of the plant mid-summer, making it a real showstopper. You will love this plant and so will the pollinators



Rough Blazing Star

Also known as Liatris, the Rough Blazing Star is also unofficially known as the "butterfly magnet" because butterflies cannot resist the blooms of this lovely plant. It is extremely drought tolerant and stands at about three feet tall with clusters of large purple blooms. Rough Blazing Star is much bigger than common Liatris and also blooms much later. Try this plant in your garden, and you will be impressed with its hardiness and beautiful blooms.



Showy Goldenrod

This plant is a much tamer, non-invasive version of ordinary Ditch Goldenrod. The blooms are large with a bright, sunny yellow color on very sturdy stems that grow up to three feet tall. It has large flowers bloom later in summer and fall, adding that perfect pop of color to any Iowa garden. Bees and other pollinators are also very attracted to this plant.

These are just a few of our native plants. To learn more about Iowa native plants, follow the link below. You will not regret planting them in your yard. They put on a show that lasts all summer! The link has information, newsletter and much more!

[Iowa Native Plant Society](#)

Dept. of Botany, Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011-1020



Do You Remember When?

With August came State Fair time! Your parents woke you up before the break of dawn. If you were awake enough, you might have gotten a pop-tart put in your hand as you were being lead out the door to the family car. Most of the time you were back to sleep before you left the driveway. When you arrived in Des Moines, you began to get excited about the days' events! Walking through the gates, you could smell the cinnamon rolls, coffee and bacon coming from the food tents. Having ridden in the car for 2 hours, you always started with breakfast at the barns.

Through the course of the day, you got to see the *largest EVERYTHING*, from animals to vegetables!

A trip through the Agriculture building was inevitable! There, you gazed upon vegetables and flowers that were *absolutely PERFECT!* And year after year, the Butter Cow!! Wow! Upstairs you were mesmerized by live honey bees! You drooled over dried fruit and candy. Saw new farm industries and ventures and so much more!



Then it was off to the Varied Industry building to see all the *fancy NEW products!* Dad would take your brother and look at the farm machinery outside, while Mom took you inside! Pots and pans, pianos, vacuums, sewing machines, everything the modern housewife would want! The Fair grounds were filled with entertainment of all types! So much to see!! And the Food!! You could find things to eat that you could not find *anywhere* else! And it was on a *Stick!* The entire day was so fascinating! As a child you absorbed everything like a sponge! Memories!! Some things have changed with time, new products, machinery, hot-tubs instead of pianos, leafless gutters and house siding. But many things have stayed the same. Many of the original buildings have been saved and renovated! And that big old Agriculture building is much the same today as it was 50 plus years ago! The vegetables and flowers shown are still as perfect as can be! The Best of the Best! My favorite place to see and be, at the one and only, *the Great Iowa State Fair!!*



Zucchini Boats

YIELD: Serves 4 PREP TIME: 35 minutes
BAKE: 350° for 25 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 medium zucchini (about 8 inches)
- 3/4 pound ground beef
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh mushrooms
- 1/2 cup chopped sweet red pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Wash, then trim the ends off zucchini. Cut the zucchini in half lengthwise; scoop out the zucchini pulp with a tablespoon, leaving 1/2 inch in the shells. Finely chop the pulp up. In a skillet, cook beef, zucchini pulp, onion, mushrooms and peppers over medium heat until meat is no longer pink. Drain off any grease or liquid. Remove from the heat. Add 1/2 cup cheese, ketchup, salt and pepper; mix well. Spoon into the zucchini shells. Place in a greased 13x9-in. baking dish. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top. Bake, uncovered, at 350° until zucchini is tender, 25-30 minutes. Test with a knife to check for doneness.

NOTES: The zucchini skin is edible. You can also make ahead and freeze for later.



August 2021

UP COMMING EVENTS

- **August 4, 2pm**
Farmland Leasing Meeting, 2:00 pm - Lakin Community Building
- **August 4, 11, 18, 25** Glenwood Farmers Market, Wednesdays, 4-6:30 pm
- **August 11, 7pm Wednesday** Seeing Red: How plants influence coloration in birds (webinar)
- **August 12-22** Iowa State Fair, Des Moines, IA
Iowa State Fair



August GARDENING TO DO LIST

- **Start** seeding and planting beets, green beans, carrots Swiss chard, kale, leaf lettuce radishes and spinach for a fall garden crop.
- **Harvest Onions** when the tops have fallen over and they begin to dry. Shake of as much dirt as possible, lay them out on a rack or tie them in bundles to hang. Place them in a warm, dry, well ventilated location to dry or cure.
- **Mid-August to Mid-September** is the best time to seed new lawns.
- **Continue** to check zucchini and squash for squash bugs.
- **Follow** ISU's "Preserve the Taste of Summer" guidelines for canning and freezing produce, fruits and meat. (Links to PM's under ISU Publications)
- **Stop** fertilizing your rose bushes
- **Wash** Hummingbird and Oriole feeders between fillings. Orioles love grape jelly and fresh oranges.
- **Keep** birdbaths full. Clean and fill regularly with fresh water to help keep from spreading diseases.



Resources for Horticulture information Iowa State University Publications

ENT 57	Emerald Ash Bore Management Options
NCPA 33	Insecticide Options for Protecting Ash Trees
PM 3074	Finding a Certified Pesticide Applicator for EAB
PM 1366	Canning: Fruit Spreads
HS 21	Canning: Salsa
PM 1368	Canning: Pickles
PM 1044	Canning: Vegetables
PM 1031	Canning: Meat, Poultry, Wild Game and Fish
PM 638	Canning and Freezing: Tomatoes
PM 1043	Canning: Fruits
RG 304	Late Season Perennial Flowers
PM 1398	Harvesting and Drying Flowers
PD 0054	Tomato Diseases and Disorders
PM 1895	Tomatillos
PM 534	Planting and harvesting times for Garden vegetables
PM 666	Weed Management in the Home Garden

Horticulture Publications on-line

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/ListCategories>



ISU Hotline Links and Numbers

Hotlines available for all

Iowa Concern 800-447-1985 Financial questions, legal education, stress counseling, crisis/disaster resources and referral (24 hrs - all days)

Beginning Farmer Center 877-BFC-1999 Program to match beginning and retiring farmers (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Teen Line 800-443-8336 Personal and health-related information and referral (24 hrs - all days)

Iowa 2-1-1 211 Resource referral for housing, health, food, family, transportation, employment, education, and legal assistance (24 hrs - all days)

Hot lines available for Iowa Residents Only

AnswerLine Toll-free: 800-262-3804 Local: 515-296-5883

Questions relating to home and family (9 am-noon & 1-4 pm)
Iowa Healthy Families 800-369-2229 Health information and referral (24 hrs - all days)

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