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School Garden Tips: December



- **Garden Maintenance:** Welcome rain! Unless you are trying to sprout seeds, you should be able to turn off your drip irrigation system completely. However, keep an eye on your plants if the weather is dry. The rains will bring more weeds--pull them before they flower to prevent spreading. Dispose of weeds in the municipal green bin. Mulch any bare spots in the garden before you leave on break with straw, if available, or cut up spent garden plants, or even dry leaves.
- **Planting Guide** December 15 through the end of January is the only time period in our planting zone when planting is not recommended. Direct sow cool season leafy greens at the beginning of the month, but only if your garden beds will irrigated over the holiday break. As the rains begin, it's a good time to spread wildflower seeds, or other

annual flower seeds--such as california poppy, cornflower, marigold, scabiosa, and calendula-- and let nature do the watering.

Seeds: Leafy greens in the beginning of the month, radishes, fava beans, chard

Plants: Onion and other allium family plants at the beginning of the month, Collards, Broccoli, Bok Choy, Peas

- **Pest & Disease Alert:** Continue to control [aphids](#) on brassicas--remove heavily infested plant parts (or entire plants if necessary), wipe or wash off with water spray any remaining. As rain begins, be on the lookout for [slugs and snails](#), or signs of their damage--irregular holes with smooth edges on leaves and flowers. Hand picking is your best bet, especially after a recent rain or under cloudy skies.

MG Mentor In Person Tip: It's hard to pull out summer annuals when they seem to still be producing fruit. Green fruits that survive into December will rarely mature in the cooler weather, so don't let little fruits stop you from pulling out a plant. It's time for them to go. Some veggies, such as tomatoes, will ripen off the vine, or can be used for cooking projects in their green state.

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UC Master Gardener Program of Alameda County
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