

## Master Gardener Favorites Cool Season Vegetables

I like to grow **beets** because the roots & greens are both edible & both delicious. My favorite is a package or mixed varieties that Renee's sells because I like the mix of colors when I cook them. They're pretty.

**Bloomsdale Longstanding Spinach:** Thick, curly, dark green leaves. Will withstand temps down to 32 degrees F uncovered and down to 26 degrees F if covered. Rich, full spinach flavor retained even when steamed. Planted in the fall for a winter harvest and in very early spring for spring harvest

I don't have room now for veggies, but we used to have a large summer garden, and another one, just as large, in the winter. We planted in September. I loved **cauliflower, broccoli, cabbages, carrots, beets**, and I can't find my diagram for the garden, but there were so many things that we grew under the floating row cover, with no bugs, and the drip line running under, trouble-free.

We really enjoy them all, but this year we are excited to try out some **Kohlrabi**. Really strange looking but super tasty! We are going to try to start them in flats and transplant as the season progresses. Can't wait to see what happens.

**Turnips, broccoli, and Snap peas** are some of my favorites. My husband loves **Kohlrabi**. I've tried to grow **brussel sprouts** twice but haven't been successful yet.

I'm new to winter vegetable gardening. In the past I've had great success with **garlic** planted in October, and I usually grow **lettuce and radishes** when our weather is cool. This year though, I've decided to branch out. Just this week I've begun planting **kale, mustard and spinach**, as well as lots of **onions and leeks**. I've started a blend of **broccoli** indoors to set out when the weather cools a bit. It's all very much an experiment, but I'm hoping for lots of fresh greens this winter. Wish me luck.

Love **mustard greens, swiss chard, butternut squash, asparagus, snow peas and broccoli**.

I plant **broccoli, carrots, Brussels sprouts, green onions**, various **lettuce** varieties, **beets**. No cauliflower....takes too much room in my garden for just one head! I try to plant soon after I pull out my summer garden and when veggies are available in nursery.

I vote for **Swiss chard**. Many varieties available but my favorite is the red. I plant it in the fall and it produces a long time. I just cut off the outer leaves as I need them and the plant keeps right on growing. It does well here in this heavy clay soil.

I've always wanted to do more winter gardening, but haven't quite fit it in my routine. My favorite winter results were with **garlic and onions**. I'm uncertain of the exact time of planting, but the Gardener's Companion states that garlic can be planted during most fall and winter months. I planted onion sets in late fall, but found that I usually had better success planting onions from seed in late winter. The first year I tried onions and garlic, I was able to store and use them for nearly 8 months. I also try to reserve a few cloves of each garlic variety to use as the "seed" garlic the following year.

I always plant peas, either the **Oregon Sugar Pod 11** which is a bush, up to 30" tall since it doesn't need staking, or **Dwarf Grey Sugar**. I have grown the **Sugar Snap** but it needs a trellis. They are all sweet and wonderful. I put the seed in September. I usually plant some potatoes, **Yukon Gold or Red skinned** from the remains of the spring harvest. I put in whole small potatoes as "seed". Plant about 1 ft. apart and can harvest in the winter. Third crop is always **broccoli**. They are started from seed and go into the ground this month when they are 3" or so tall;

spaced 18" apart and stand back. Just 6 plants is all we can eat or giveaway. Last year did 2 varieties, planted a couple of weeks apart to lengthen the harvest. Swiss chard grows for me year round, until it flowers, so usually start a few from seed now for next spring. Then there's all the wonderful **lettuces**. I usually put in seed of a **Mesclun** mix that you can cut and it'll re-grow. It will be there throughout the winter into spring. A second planting mid March extends this crop also.

I like to plant **spinach**, no special type. Remember that spinach problem a few years ago? I was so happy I could just step outside and harvest my own crop. I haven't been successful with broccoli although I've tried several times.

I love growing cool-season greens of all kinds. They're among the most nutritious vegetables, easy to grow and relatively fast from seed to harvest. They're also well-suited to growing in small spaces -- there's a great article on **mesclun** in this September's Sunset Magazine (p. 62) telling how to grow a blend of baby lettuces, arugula, radicchio and mustard in a container, plus how to harvest and use the leaves. I've also had good success growing **kale and Swiss chard: red and dino kales** look and taste great (but do need some space), and **Rainbow Swiss chard** is a beautiful variety of an old favorite. Other cool season vegetables that repay the effort: **Edible pod peas** have to be the best invention, and disease-resistant varieties such as **Super Sprint** from Nichols are widely available. **Fava beans** (not a container crop) produce delicious beans and enrich the soil at the same time. And **radishes, carrots and beets** (especially **golden beets**) are always worth planting. **For all cool season crops, it's important to refer the chart in the MG Handbook for local planting times.**

Winter vegetable gardening is my favorite. There is a large variety to grow, there are few bugs and the watering requirements aren't as rigid. I grow my veggies in my greenhouse since I live in snow country. Inside the greenhouse I have a grow box which allows me to grow 8 rows, each 3 feet wide. In addition to that I have several other containers I grow **lettuce** and more delicate greens in. I usually grow a variety including: **kale, spinach, swiss chard, beets, mustard greens, bok choy, asian broccoli, arugula, and cilantro**. I also grow greens in a cold frame.

I integrate herbs and veggies into my small yard and some of my favorite winter veggies double as ornamentals, in particular **Bright Lights Swiss Chard** (Feb) with it's gorgeous bright colors, **Redbor Kale** (July and August) and **Maussane Sugar Snap Peas** (heirloom pea) (Sept). This is a beautiful plant that will climb to 6 feet or more if given the chance and are sweet and crunchy right off of the plant. **Lettuces** can go anywhere and two favorites are **Black Seeded Simpson and Red Sails** (Nov). I also like **b**(Aug), planted in succession because they grow very fast and **Beet Early Wonder** (Feb). It takes some planning ahead to do winter veggies, as just about the time we're really into savoring a bumper crop of tomatoes in July, you have to start seeding for some winter crops such as **broccoli** and **cauliflower** so they can be ready to plant when the timing is right in the fall. By the time our summer gardens are winding down, it's too late for some of them to be started unless you wait for the second go-round in Jan and Feb. to set out in early spring.

The easiest winter veggie I've grown is **Swiss Chard**, in fact when it bolted in early summer I cut off the part going to seed and it sent up new leaves. So I've still got it. It's a bit of a problem keeping the snails and slugs off. But if I'd be more consistent about the battle, I think I'd be more successful! I like to saute the chard in olive oil with red Italian peppers and garlic.... my mother always did that! The rainbow chard is so pretty in garden.

I'm more a 'summer veggie' person, but I like to try **Brussels Sprouts** - either green or purple. Half the time I can't get the sprout to form a tight head and don't know why. Either the water or weather, or planted too late - no one knows.

Last year the sprouts were all about the size of a large grape - and never grew larger! They are interesting for kids

to see when the Youth Gardening group has field trips. **Snow peas** are another of my favorite. We usually plant some type of peas when the kids' tours do a 'plant a seed' activity in the fall.

I enjoy winter vegetable gardening more than summer gardening. You generally don't have to deal with the extreme variations of temperatures that plague our summer gardening season. After some practice you can get quite good at it. I start with **peas**, which I will be planting in early September. I also plant (from seed) about 9-10 different **lettuce** varieties. I do stagger planting, will start next week and plant more in 3 weeks. I used to buy my lettuce plants in the nursery, have found that to be an un-reliable source. Besides that I will plant **spinach**, **broccoli** and **cauliflower** plants from the nursery, generally will wait with these until the weather cools a bit, but probably late September. I have found that the different lettuce varieties, with staggered plantings will provide all the lettuce needs for us and the neighborhood through April or in some years even longer. I also plant plenty of **cilantro**, which is a necessary ingredient for salads. Lastly, I like to intersperse **kale** and **lettuce** in my flower beds, they seem to do well and add a different touch to an otherwise dull winter flower bed. Winter gardening is less demanding and is good for the soul.

I've had to give up planting many winter vegetables since my dog grazes on the tiny beet, mustard and turnip greens. I now plant 'salad bowls' of **lettuces** and **arugula** on the patio. '**Sanguine**' a red-spotted butter lettuce is a favorite as is '**Wild Rocket**' **arugula**. Both are slow to bolt when spring heat arrives. **Sorrel** does well in pots in winter when protected from frost. '**Golden India**' **edible pea pods** are a winner as well. Good flavor, lovely golden color, and because they're tall pole peas, the short dog can only chew the bottom leaves.

I started my six packs from seed last Monday. So far, we have **gai lohn (Chinese broccoli)**, **red flowering kale**, **"Marathon" broccoli**, **"Snowball Y" cauliflower** and **"Royal Vantage" cabbage**. We will direct sow powdery mildew resistant **"Goliath" snow peas**, **"Detroit Dark Red" beets and sweet peas**. I think I will plant bright yellow trailing **nasturtiums** for fun. I need to figure out a way to grow lettuce that doesn't end up full of sand after it rains.

My favorite is **lettuce**. I plant several types and mixes each year. Yum Yum. Next are **beets, carrots, and peas**.

**Beets** - I like to plant August through September. I plant a small row one week and another a few weeks later and so on. That way I am not over run with beets. I don't have a favorite variety. I like to use the tops a few at a time while they are growing and pull the beets for eating when they are ready.

**Kale**-My favorite to grow and eat is **Italian Heirloom Lacinato**. It grows well into the summer and all through the winter. I use leaves as I need them and the plant continues to grow. It is August and I still have one plant growing. It has not bolted, even in the heat.

**Peas**- I like to grow **Sugar snap peas**. My grandchildren like to eat them right off the vine.

I always plant a variety of **lettuce, butter leaf and red** are really my favorites. I harvest a few leaves at a time until the first frost.