

# Garden Line - Fall Gardening in Houston

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## Fall Gardening in Houston

Ahhh, fall, my favorite time of year. The sweltering days of summer are a thing of the past. Days spent out in the garden now are much more enjoyable. The sun is at a lower angle in the sky, and things just look and feel different. If you didn't get a chance to start your winter garden late last month, early to mid-October is still a fine time to get your seeds and transplants in the ground for a great winter harvest. Fall is also a great time to introduce children to gardening, due to the nice conditions outside.



Among the veggies that do well with the cooler temperatures at this time of year are:

Beets, bok choy, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, Swiss chard, cilantro, collard greens, garlic, kale, lettuce, multiplying onion, bulb onion, mustard greens, oregano, strawberry, turnip, spinach, globe artichoke, arugula, Brussels sprouts, radish, dill, endive, fennel, garlic chives, kohlrabi, leek, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme, sorrel, and several other crops. As you can see, if you have the desire, you can have a very diverse and productive winter garden here in Houston.

I mentioned introducing children to gardening earlier. Helping a child start some quick-growing plants such as lettuce or radish is a great way to start. Radishes can be ready in about 20 days after they are sown. Lettuce takes a little longer but is still relatively quick. Choose several varieties of lettuce and let them sow them every couple of weeks for a staggered harvest. Allowing children to grow their own plants from seed lets them see the whole process from seed, to germination, to growth, to harvest. Other plants you can start from seed this fall include beets, bok choy, carrot, Swiss chard, greens, and most of the herbs listed above.





Certain plants do better when bought as a small plant from the local nursery and then set out in your garden. Plants that fall into this category are broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, spinach, and Brussels sprouts. Onions are easy to set out from either small slips or bulbs. I prefer bulbs, personally, because I can plant them a few at a time and keep the remainder of the bulbs in my refrigerator until I'm ready to plant more.

Be sure to keep everything well watered this time of year. We can still get some warm days and plants still need some help until they get their roots established. Give your plants some fertilizer (especially the leafy greens) and you'll be on your way to a great harvest this winter!

