

## Garden Line - September/October - 2011

by Brent Moon - HPARD Urban Garden Manager

Now that fall is almost here it's time to start thinking about preparing your fall and winter garden. This is my favorite time of year for vegetable gardening. Temperatures are milder and more conducive to growing all manner of vegetables. Following is a list of vegetables that you can plant now and get a harvest before the weather gets too cold.



### Plants for a Fall Garden (Plant early-mid-September)

- Cucumbers
- Green beans
- Lima beans
- Seed potatoes
- Snap pole beans
- Squash
- Strawberries
- Sweet corn
- Swiss chard
- Watermelon

Below is a list for plants that will do well throughout our winter.

### Plants for a Winter Garden (Plant late-Sept-January)

- |           |                              |                |               |
|-----------|------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| - Lettuce | - Collard and Mustard greens | - Spinach      | - Broccoli    |
| - Radish  | - Kale                       | - Carrots      | - Cauliflower |
| - Turnips | - Swiss chard                | - Green onions | - Bok choy    |
| - Parsley | - Sugar snap peas            | - Cabbage      | - Kohlrabi    |

These lists are not exhaustive but cover the majority of plants that most gardeners will want to grow here in the Houston area. Don't be afraid to experiment with something new. If you want to try it, go for it! A great book, written specifically for local gardeners, is *Year Round Vegetables, Fruits, and Flowers for Metro Houston* by Dr. Bob Randall. He is one of the founding members of Urban Harvest ([www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org)) and is one of the most knowledgeable people about growing fruits and vegetables in the Houston area. Look for his book at local gardening and feed stores.



One of the best ways to get your fall or winter garden off to a good start is, of course, to add a generous amount (3-4") of compost to your garden. Lightly till or rake it in prior to planting. Once you have sown your seeds or planted your transplants, give them either a dose of organic fertilizer such as fish emulsion and/or seaweed extract or a light dose of synthetic water-soluble fertilizer. Fertilize every few weeks to keep them growing strongly. Micro-Life is a good granular, organic fertilizer that you can top-dress with.

Fall is a great time to freshen up the look of your landscape by pulling out any annuals that may not look so great after our brutal summer. September is a good time to plant marigolds. Marigolds come in a color range from yellow to orange, to reddish, the perfect colors for fall! Plant them now and you will have an amazing display of color right up until fall. My advice is don't bother planting mums in Houston. Our temperatures are often still too hot this time of year and they will only last a week or two at best. Plant marigolds and you'll get the same look that will last much longer.



October is the month for dividing and replanting daylilies. If you have some clumps that have gotten too big, dig them out, trying to keep roots intact. Depending upon how large the clump is, you can easily half and possibly even quarter your clump. You now have several clumps that you can spread around your landscape or share with friends and neighbors!

Fall is also wildflower-planting season. Here in the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, we typically sow our seeds in late September. This allows us to take advantage of fall and winter rains that will start the germination process. The seeds sprout and begin growing slowly throughout the fall and winter and by the warmer weather of March they are ready to take off and bloom like crazy! If you have the room, here are some wildflower species that we have had success with in H.P.A.R.D.:



- Bluebonnet
- Indian Paintbrush
- Drummond Phlox
- Gaillardia (Indian Blanket)
- Coreopsis (Tickseed)
- Baby Blue Eyes
- Rocket Larkspur
- Plains Coreopsis
- Showy Primrose
- Mexican Hat
- Rudbeckia
- Winecup

Enjoy fall everyone. See you in November!