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# ASK A MASTER GARDENER

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## FALL VEGETABLES

*By Laurie Meyerpeter, Placer County Master Gardener*

**Q** What vegetables can I plant in the fall?

**A** Many vegetables are best planted in either late summer or early fall for a fall or winter crop. Or the same vegetables can be planted in early spring for a crop that matures before the heat of the summer.

These cool season crops fall into several categories. The first are vegetables that are grown for their leaves; lettuces, spinach, Swiss chard, mustard greens, kale, and collards. These are typically grown from seed although many nurseries carry seedlings as well. Beginning gardeners may want to try leaf lettuce, spinach, and chard. Leafy crops can be grown in pots as well.

The second type of vegetable is root crops such as carrots, radishes, turnips, onions, and the more obscure rutabagas. These are nearly always grown from seed, except for onions that can be grown from “sets” (immature onions) or from seedlings available from a nursery. If grown from seedlings, separate the tiny plants and set in the garden. Beginners may wish to try radishes, onion sets, and short varieties of carrots.

Potatoes can also be grown in the milder areas of this region. Choose “seed potatoes” from a nursery or mail order supplier and plant them in an area with good drainage. Usually directions are given on the bag for cutting the potatoes up, although potatoes grow just fine when kids just drop them in the ground. Potatoes are typically easy to grow and popular with children.

Also grown in the fall are vegetables in the “cole” family, which is a fancier way of referring to plants in the cabbage family. These include broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and other more obscure members of the family like kohlrabi. These plants are commonly grown from starts obtained at a nursery, although they can be grown from seed as well if started early. Beginning gardeners are usually more successful with starts.

A few cool weather vegetables are grown for their “fruit”, such as peas, snow peas, and fava beans. All are typically easy to grow from seed.

While you are at the nursery picking up plants and seeds, remember to pick up a few cool season flowers like calendulas, snapdragons, and pansies to add some color to your fall vegetable garden. Have fun!

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