

### Sow in August – and Harvest Fall, Winter, and Spring

Whenever we plant, we are gambling – sometimes foolishly, sometimes less so. We suggest some vegetables to plant in August that involve *minimal* risk...

A lot of tasty vegetables can be sown or planted in August, with a good chance of success. One of the ways to lessen the risks involved in August planting is to profit from the field tests done by "local" seed companies, especially for vegetables that are a little tricky to grow, or ones that are new to you. These catalogs and seed packets from the following Pacific Northwest companies may include advice specific to our geographic area.

- [Territorial Seed Company](#) in Cottage Grove, Oregon
- [Nichols Garden Nursery](#) in Albany, Oregon
- [Abundant Life Seed Foundation](#) in Port Townsend, Washington

If you have a specific variety of seed you want to try planting in August, note the "days-to-maturity" number on the package or in the catalog; count back that many days from the average earliest hard-frost date for your part of Clark County; add a good 10 or 20 days to that figure (because of shorter days and cooler temperatures in the fall) - and there you have a good estimate of when to plant that variety.

If you have or can find seedling plants of the following, they should do well planted in August: broccoli (for fall harvest), brussels sprouts (for winter and early spring harvest), cabbage (for fall and winter harvest), Chinese cabbage (for late fall harvest) and cauliflower (for autumn harvest).

Spinach for fall and early winter consumption should be sown early in the month. The July-August 1999 issue of *Organic Gardening* magazine suggests 'Bloomsdale', a variety which is available from many seed racks and catalogs, for autumn planting and spring harvest. Territorial Seed Company, in their Winter 1999 catalog, notes that 'Bloomsdale Savoy' will overwinter and produce much earlier in spring than if spring planted. That means, of course, a lengthier spring harvest of spinach before the inevitable bolting. You can extend your fall spinach harvest by planning for a covering (tunnel, cloche, cold frame) as the weather turns cold. Sowing Swiss chard may be a bit of a gamble in August, but if you have the space and inclination, and particularly if you can cover it in October, give it a try! Master Gardener Dick Stauffer, who seldom sees frost before November in his part of Clark County, plants peas in mid-August.

Sow kohlrabi by mid-August and you may be able to harvest it all winter and spring. 'Kolibri', available from Territorial Seeds and from [Pinetree Garden Seeds](#), is one of the best varieties for late-season harvest and is also a very ornamental plant. The July-August 1999 issue of *Organic Gardening* magazine suggests the varieties 'Purple Vienna' and 'Grand Duke' for autumn sowing.

Overwintering onions and so-called "spring" varieties of cabbage are sown in late August to be harvested next March and April. The famous 'Walla Walla' onion should be sweeter from a late August/early September sowing than from a spring sowing. Two suggested varieties of spring cabbage are 'First Early Market' and 'Springtime'.

Arugula, endive, escarole, lettuce, mesclun, pac choi, mustard greens, scallions (green onions or bunching onions), turnips, and the herbs cilantro and chervil are all good choices for August sowing. Territorial Seed Company recommends 'Guardman' as an onion variety to plant in August or September for October or November harvest, and 'Winter White Bunching' as an overwintering variety to plant in August for harvest the following spring (February into May). Corn salad (mache) for winter and spring salads should be sown after the middle of the month. Binda Colebrook, in her classic *Winter Gardening in the Maritime Northwest*, advises sowing it "just after the first heavy August rains". Salad greens can be harvested for a longer period of time if you provide cover when the weather worsens (some years as early as October in some parts of the county).

As gardeners who live in the maritime Northwest, we are in an enviable position: we can harvest produce all year long. August plantings play an important role in the establishment of the year-round garden. So what are you doing sitting there at your computer?