

Fall Garden Starter Guide for USDA Zone 6

What to Plant, When to Plant, and How to Keep It Going

Brought to you by your fellow gardeners at **Knollwood Garden Center**

WELCOME TO FALL PLANTING

Fall gardening in Ohio's Miami Valley comes with cooler weather, fewer bugs, and sweeter harvests. If you've never planted a second-season garden before, this guide will walk you through when and what to plant, how to time your fall crops, and ways to make the most of the season before the first hard frost.

This resource is written specifically for gardeners in USDA Zone 6.

WHAT TO PLANT THIS FALL



LEAFY GREENS

Lettuce, spinach, kale, mustard, and arugula thrive in cooler weather. They germinate quickly and tolerate light frost, especially when covered. You can harvest baby leaves in 3–4 weeks or let them grow to full heads. For container gardens, leafy greens are some of the easiest and most forgiving options.



ROOT VEGETABLES

Carrots, beets, radishes, and turnips prefer cool soil and shorter days. They should be direct-sown into loose soil; don't transplant. Radishes mature in as little as 25 days, making them great for quick results. Carrots and beets take longer but develop their best flavor when nights are cool and crisp.

Thinking about fall potatoes? It's a little trickier in Zone 6, but doable in containers or protected beds. Scan the code to read our full potato-growing guide with timing, variety suggestions, and care tips.





ONIONS & RELATIVES

Green onions, shallots, onion sets, and bunching onions all handle chilly nights well. Plant them early in the season to give roots time to settle in. Shallots and sets may not reach full size before winter, but they'll overwinter and return strong in spring if protected with mulch.

Want to learn more about growing onions, shallots, or bunching onions in fall? Scan the code to explore our onion-growing guide for planting tips, spacing advice, and variety recommendations.



BRASSICAS

Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts grow best when started early. If you're running late, pick up young starts instead of sowing from seed. These plants love the slower pace of fall; it gives them time to form tight, flavorful heads. Just give them space, water, and consistent sunlight.

Need help planning your fall crops? Scan the code for our planting chart, complete with sowing timelines, crop spacing, and container-friendly options.



WHEN TO PLANT

In Zone 6, the first frost usually arrives in mid to late October.

Use that date to plan backwards:

- Crops that mature in 30 days: plant by mid-September
- Crops that mature in 60 days: plant by mid-August
- Spinach, kale, mache, and other cold-hardy greens can be sown into early October

Start fast growers later, and give slower crops a head start indoors or with starter plants.

Want more time to harvest? Try **row covers or cold frames** to protect tender plants when overnight temps dip below 40°F.

KEEP IT GROWING

PREPARE YOUR BEDS

Start by clearing out any crops that have stopped producing or are past their prime. Pull spent plants, compost anything healthy, and toss anything that looks diseased. Loosen up the soil with a garden fork or trowel and mix in a few inches of compost or soil conditioner. This refreshes nutrients and improves drainage before you replant.

RAISED BEDS AND CONTAINERS

Raised beds drain better than in-ground plots and stay warmer, longer. That makes them a great choice for fall. If you're using containers, make sure they're deep enough for roots (especially for carrots and beets), and check that drainage holes are clear. Move pots into sunny spots and group them close for easier watering and covering.

FROST PROTECTION TIPS

Don't let one cold night cut your harvest short. Lightweight row covers and frost cloth can give you a buffer of 4–8°F. That's often enough to keep greens, herbs, and young plants alive and growing. Drape covers loosely so air can circulate, and use hoops or tall stakes for crops like broccoli or kale to avoid crushing leaves.

HELPFUL FALL TOOLS

- Compost or soil amendments (like mushroom compost or organic fertilizer)
- Row cover or frost cloth
- Hoops or flexible supports
- Garden scissors or pruners
- Plant markers (you will forget where the turnips are—we've been there)
- Watering can or hose with gentle spray

LET'S GROW INTO FALL TOGETHER

Fall gardening is one of the most rewarding ways to wind down the season. It's quieter, cooler, and full of second chances. If you're not sure what to plant, when to plant it, or how to get your beds ready—we're here for you.

At Knollwood Garden Center, we've got seeds, veggie starts, compost, soil blends, frost protection, and friendly advice from people who grow in the same weather you do. Stop by and let's plan a cozy, colorful, harvest-worthy season together.



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