

Winter Gardening Newsletter

by Linda Gilkeson

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Last plantings; garden question forum

Hard to believe it is mid-August!

We are now out of time to start vegetables from seed for winter harvests, with a couple of exceptions. You can still sow spinach, but go out and plant seeds right this minute. We can usually still get a pretty good crop of winter lettuce if they are sown by the last week of August and corn salad can be seeded as late as first week of September--though given the cool year, I am sowing it next week. I like to scatter seed of corn salad and winter lettuce under squash vines and other plants that will be coming out of the garden in the fall. By the time I remove the vines (cut them off, don't pull), the ground is well covered by a crop of hardy greens.

You can still plant vegetable starts from nurseries and farm stands, but be aware that Thrifty's and some nurseries are selling seedlings of summer broccoli (e.g., Green Goliath, Premium Crop) and summer cauliflower (e.g., Snowball, Snow Crown). These are NOT what you want to plant now--the broccoli may have time for a shoot or two before winter if we have a very warm, long fall (I'm not betting on that!), but they will die over the winter in all but the warmest gardens. No matter what the weather, the cauliflowers will be a loss; some may produce tiny 'button heads' in late fall, but that will be that. So, look for purple sprouting broccoli varieties and the following cauliflowers: Purple Cape, Galleon, Aalsmeer. Any varieties of kale, kohlrabi, Swiss chard, leaf mustard, spinach, and the hardy Chinese cabbage and other leafy greens should do fine, but make sure any lettuce starts you buy are fall or winter varieties.

On Salt Spring, Chorus Frog Farm stand (Rainbow Road) is having a sale on winter veggie starts now. Foxglove nursery has a good selection of winter starts they have grown themselves (they also have some summer broccoli and cauliflower starts from another supplier, however, so make sure you buy the right ones).

Upcoming gardening forum: I will be participating in a forum set up by the New Society Publishers, the publishers of my new book, *Backyard Bounty* Starting Wednesday August 18, I you have gardening questions, log in to join the forum: <http://www.newsociety.com/forums/Backyard-Bounty-by-Linda-Gilkeson>

NSP is offering a free copy of *Backyard Bounty* to the first 5 people to post a comment in the forum, so have at it! The forum runs for about 3 weeks.

For info on my books [including my new best seller, **Backyard Bounty**, or to check my 2011 and 2012 schedule for talks and presentations in your area see: www.lindagilkeson.ca

You can read all of my previous messages on the Salt Spring Energy Strategy website: www.saltspringenergystrategy.org