



GARDEN NOTES

LATE SEASON GARDENING CAN STILL BE SUCCESSFUL

By Dennis Hinkamp

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Summer-20

There are still many vegetables that can be planted now to produce a great harvest before the snow flies (that's assuming, of course, that snow won't arrive in the middle of August), says Jerry Goodspeed, Utah State University Extension horticulturist.

With the wet, cold May and June we've had this year, there may be many late gardens.

"This time of year consider planting beets, kohlrabi, summer squash, green beans, carrots, radishes, and even peas, he says. Other vegetables can still be planted as long as they have a short growing season. If the weather cooperates, we probably still have 70 growing days left," he says.

The most important thing to remember when planting vegetables in the middle of the summer is to prepare the soil properly, he says. Add some organic matter and work it into the soil. An all purpose fertilizer should also be used.

After working and preparing the soil, the next trick is to get the seeds to germinate, Goodspeed explains. If the temperatures are hot and the air is dry, this can be difficult. Small seeds such as carrots are a particular challenge. The seeds must not be allowed to dry out. When the seedlings are just germinating they are most vulnerable because they have very small roots.

"Some people put a wood plank over the seeds, removing it once they have germinated. I don't recommend it however, because slugs are also attracted to dark, damp places and may eat your young vegetables before they have a chance to see daylight," he says.

Other more sensible solutions to maintaining seed moisture include covering them with peat moss, small burlap strips, dried lawn clippings, shredded paper, potting soil, or other light organic matter, Goodspeed says. The seedlings should be able push up through the material while it prevents them from drying out.

Then, once the new plants are up and growing they need to be kept moist until they establish a deep root system, Goodspeed says. Water them up to three times a week the first couple of weeks, then slowly cut back to twice weekly, and finally water just once a week like the rest of the garden. Watering deeply and less frequently develops healthier plants with deeper roots.

Also consider the same types of vegetable you would usually plant in the early spring, he says. Cool season crops such as peas, cole crops, spinach, and lettuce can be difficult to establish in the heat, but eventually produce about the time the weather cools in the fall. Those that can withstand a light frost provide fresh vegetables from the garden well into November.

For more information, contact your local [USU County Extension office](#).

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