



MESSENGER-INQUIRER

	University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment <i>Cooperative Extension Service</i>
	extension.ca.uky.edu HORTICULTURE EDUCATION Annette Meyer Heisdorffer, PhD Daviness County Extension Office

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Keep the Garden Producing Vegetables into the Fall
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Summer vegetables from the garden are delicious. Using the growing conditions needed by the different vegetables, keeps the garden-fresh vegetables coming to the table into the fall. Continuing to plant warm-season crops and planting cool-season crops at the proper time, extends the vegetable season.

Continuous planting, called succession planting, is the seeding or transplanting of a crop every two to three weeks. There is still time to plant more warm-season vegetables to harvest some produce before they are killed by frost. More plantings can be made of cucumbers, tomatoes, and pepper transplants until July 15; snap beans until August 1; and summer squash such as zucchini and yellow straight neck until August 15. Try early maturing varieties to enjoy more produce before the first frost which will kill warm-season vegetables.

Some warm-season vegetables such as okra, eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes continue to produce into September if the plants are healthy, so these may not need to be planted again.

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However, if plants are producing poor-quality fruit or you know that older plants do not produce well, plant more.

Crops such as pumpkins, watermelons, and winter squash may require over 100 days to mature. Check the number of days to harvest before planting more of these. Some can be planted as seeds or transplants up to July 15 and still produce before the first killing frost around October 20.

Another way to extend the season is to plant cool-season crops again. Cool-season vegetables tolerate a light frost. If they are planted too late in the spring, summer heat reduces their quality by forcing some to flower and form seeds and others to develop off flavors, bitterness, poor texture, and low yields.

Cool-season crops planted in the fall garden grow well when the days become cooler; most can also withstand a light frost. Cole crops such as broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower are excellent for the fall garden. Seeds of these crops should be sown by July 15. This produces transplants for the garden at the latest time of August 5 to August 15.

Several plantings of leaf lettuce and radishes can be made since they are ready to harvest 35 to 50 days after planting, depending on the cultivar. Due to the heat, it would be best to sow lettuce seeds in the shade of other plants in the garden because the seeds do not germinate well at high temperatures. Continue to plant lettuce until September 1 and radishes until October 1.

Mustard greens, kale, endive, beets, and turnips can be seeded in the garden from July 15 until around August 15. Collards and carrots should be seeded up to August 1. Spinach can be seeded in the garden from August through September 15.

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Remember that cool nights slow growth, so vegetables take longer to mature in the fall. Keep this slower-growing pace in mind when you check seed catalogs for the average days to maturity. Some of the best quality vegetables are produced during fall's warm days and cool nights. These environmental conditions add sugar to cole crops and crispness to carrots.

When starting the fall garden, you may have to water the seeds after planting for them to germinate depending on the weather. Continue to watch the seedlings to make sure they have adequate water to grow but not too much to cause them to rot.

Keep in mind, there will be more insect pests present in the fall garden than the early spring garden. Identifying the pest allows you to use the appropriate management measures for the situation. It is always a good idea to remove plants that have finished producing. By eliminating garden debris, hiding places for insect pests are reduced.

After removing the finished spring vegetable crops, use this space again. Do not plant closely-related vegetables from the spring crop back in the same rows because of possible disease and insect carryover. Practicing crop rotation prevents the buildup of diseases and insect pests in your garden.

Polyethylene (plastic) row covers made into low tunnels can extend the growing season of some warm-season crops into the fall. Some cool-season crops may benefit from the row covers as well.

To construct the tunnels, push hoops taller than the crop, made of number 9 galvanized wire into the ground 3 to 5 feet apart at the time of planting. When frost is predicted, cover them with clear polyethylene. Bury edges of the plastic in the ground, pin them down with wire

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staples, or place heavy bags of rock or sand on it to keep the low tunnel closed. During sunny days in the fall following the frost, vent the tunnel by loosening the sides or ends of the plastic to keep it from becoming too hot for the plants.

Bed sheets can be used as a temporary floating cover over crops when a light frost is predicted. Spun-bound materials also provide a couple of degrees of protection.

For more information about extending garden season into the fall, contact the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service at 270-685-8480 or annette.heisdorffer@uky.edu.

Annette's Tip:

To reduce the mosquito populations, remember to avoid water forming puddles where possible.

Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis (Bti) toxin is formulated into granules or blocks (Mosquito Dunks) for application to standing water. Follow label instructions.

Upcoming Event: The Daviess County Lions Club Fair is next week! Enter your fruits, vegetables, cut flowers, and herbs on Tuesday, July 16, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the fairgrounds in Philpot. Entry information is available at the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Office and <https://daviess.ca.uky.edu/dcfair>.

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