

Fall & Winter Maintenance Tips for your **Veggie Garden**



Plant edible perennials such as fruit trees and bushes. It's also time to plant Spring flowering bulbs, garlic, and shallots.

Mulch perennials to keep down weeds and maintain soil moisture.

Sow cover crops. If you have bed space you're not going to use for the next few months, consider growing a cover crop to add organic matter and Nitrogen to the soil. Good choices for raised beds or small garden plots are clovers or vetches.

Direct sow fava beans now for a May crop. Soak the seeds in water for 12-24 hours before sowing for quicker germination.

Keep after the aphids! Check your veggies - especially your brassicas - often, and use a strong spray of water to clean off aphid colonies. If they recolonize quickly, spray with an organic insecticidal soap.

Prune back cane berries (raspberries and blackberries) to keep the patch tidy. Any cane that had fruit on it this past season can be pruned out.

Be prepared for frost by insulating your crops with frost blankets. These blankets not only protect your plants from frost, but generally warm up and optimize their growing environment. Well-hydrated plants handle light frosts better than dehydrated ones, so it's also good to make sure to keep up with irrigation until the rains really set in.

Keep pathways free of fallen leaves that can become mushy and slippery.

Maintain compost piles.

Once the rainy season has begun, **remove the batteries from your irrigation timers and store the timers** in a dry place over the Winter. If possible, also **remove the drip tube/tape from your beds** and store until next Spring. This will make it last longer and make your Spring bed prep much easier. Winter can also be a great time to **clean and sharpen your tools**, and **organize your tool shed**.