FALL VEGETABLE PLANTING

Luisa and Jesse Walden
September 8, 2020  8pm – 9pm
September 12, 2020  12pm – 1pm

City of Albany Recreation & Community Services Department
Berkeley Garden Club
Fall and Winter Vegetable Gardens

Hi,
We are Jesse and Luisa Walden and we want to share with you the vegetables and fruits that we have had success with planted in the fall.
We will talk about how we start our plants from seeds or in some cases why nursery starts are preferrable and which varieties are good for growing in our San Francisco Bay Area.

Our mantra is something there is that does not love an empty hole, so find a hole & fill it!
Our garden space is not very big, but we try to maximize every space we have. The narrow strip along our driveway has citrus as the main landscaping – Improved Meyer Lemon, Bearss Lime (far right), mandarins and 2 very productive Blueberry bushes (far left). The edging is kitchen herbs, especially Lemon Thyme which is very pretty, usually backed by lettuce.
Whenever possible we paint our inexpensive tee-pees (8’ long 1” dowels) and trellises from Home Depot bright colors to add a playful touch to the garden.

The vegetable garden mixed in with permanent plantings can still be an attractive place.
Payback!
Payback for later
Keep Records
Now that summer is over, let’s keep the bounty coming!

Here is Jesse doing his best Jacques Pepin imitation
The Year-Round Bounty

Here in the Bay Area we can garden for 12 months a year, although not so much fun this week!

In most parts of the country in February people are shoveling snow while we are harvesting fresh escarole and Brussel sprouts.

We do need to plan and prepare for our various seasons and their bounty
The fall garden in the Bay Area

- The building blocks of the vegetable garden – soil, water and light
- Seeds and plants –
  - Seeds in the ground
  - Seeds started indoors
  - Plants from the nursery
- What to plant now
- Information about individual plants
- Some resources
- Questions
Soil – Water – Light

Soil – good garden dirt should be

• Loose enough to poke your finger in
• Full of organic material and worms
• Well draining, water should not stand on the surface for a long time
• Not compacted - don’t step on it
• Neutral to slightly acid, the pH about 6.5 to 7. If you can, test the soil every year or two. Test kits and meters are available at most nurseries.
• Check your plants. Some need a higher or lower pH to use available soil nutrients
How to improve your soil

• Add compost every time you plant
• Top dress as the plants grow. Add some compost around the plant about an inch or 2 away from stem.
• Use high quality weed free compost
  • American Soil – Walt Whitman Blend
• Mulch to keep weeds down, moisture in and protect the soil surface
  • American soil – ¼ inch fir bark
Soil – Water – Light

Water

• Prevent new seedlings from drying out!
• Even water promotes even growth
• Have a simple drip irrigation system to assure even watering
• Add an automatic timer
• Don’t count on rain
Soil – Water – Light

• **Light:** Know your garden
Where are the buildings, trees, and other sun blocks in the fall and winter?

• Partial sun vegetables generally need 4 to 6 hours of sun.

• Light shade vegetables need about 2 to 4 hours of sun.

• How do you know how much light your vegetable need? Look them up on line, don’t guess
Seeds and Plants: Starting from seeds or buying plants from the nursery?

• **Seeds in the ground**
  • Loosen the first inch or 2 of soil
  • Make a shallow trench
  • Plant seeds at a depth of 4 times their size in the trench a few inches apart
  • Cover with fine soil and press down gently so the soil is in contact with the seed
  • Gently water regularly until the seedlings are up
  • Snip to thin, don’t pull
  • Check germination time for your variety
  • Essential method for starting root crops

*The advantages of seeds are availability of more varieties and, best of all, the ability to trade seeds with your gardening buddies!*
Seeds and Plants

• Starting Seeds indoors
  • Having plants ready to plant can save weeks
  • Avoids empty garden space
  • Some seeds require special treatment, temperature or may take a long time to germinate

Some of our 6 packs almost ready for planting
Starting seeds indoors need not be difficult or very time consuming. The basic pieces are light, heat, water, some soil and containers.
This is how I do it. It may not be the most elegant set-up, but it works well, was not very costly and was pretty easy to set-up.

I used 2 x 4’s and scrap ply to build 2 tiers.

I hung grow lights above each level and heating pads on the bottom controlled by timers.

You can use a corner of the basement, the back of the garage, an enclosed porch or a spot in the house.

A one tier set-up on a long table would be even simpler. Suspend some lights over the surface. Have an electric outlet for the heating pad and lights. A timer is nice too.

The returns will justify the effort!
Seeds and Plants

- Soak Jiffy Plugs* until they expand to full size and keep seeds moist
- Supply bottom heat. I use purchased heating mats.
- Supply light to seedlings after germination
- You can give the roots more space later by later transfer plugs to 6 packs
- Keep them under lights
- Harden the plants off for a week before putting into ground by gradually acclimating them to outside conditions

Google seed variety to determine its requirements

*Jiffy Plugs can be planted directly in the ground thus minimizing transplant shock

Grow lights, electric heating pad available on-line
These are 12” LED units
The fluorescent fixtures are 2 feet long
Transplanting starts

Seedlings a few weeks after planting seeds

Escarole, lettuce and chard in the garden

*Always have plants ready to go into empty spaces
This morning’s transplants

- Kale and salad greens
Seeds and Plants

Buy organic 6 packs or 4” pots from the nursery

- Can save weeks
- Someone else does the work
- Control over placement in the garden
- Best for difficult plants
  but
- Higher cost per plant
- Less selection than starting from seed packs
Grow Bags

• Good choice where space is limited
• Available in different sizes – we use 10 gallon
• Great for root crops where loose soil is a must
• Useful for crop rotation
• Last multiple seasons

Compact “Sunrise Sauce Patio”: ideal for bags
Fertilizers and soil amendments

- The summer growing season has used up many soil nutrients
- Fertilize regularly – organic fertilizers are slower acting [weakly bi-weekly]
- Top dress with compost
- Winter rains wash nutrients out. Replace them for happier plants.

- General purpose organic fertilizer
  - Espoma Garden-tone 3-4-4
  - Jobe’s Granular Fertilizer 4-4-4
  - EB Stone Tomato & Vegetable 4-5-3
- Fertilizer for root crops
  - More phosphorous and potassium
- Fertilizer for leaf crops
  - Generally more nitrogen
- Fish Emulsion
  - Minerals and trace elements
- Acid Loving Plants fertilizer
- Citrus Food
- Container Plants
  - Maxsea
- Oyster meal for calcium where you will plant next year’s tomatoes
What to plant

• Fall planting: Shorter and cooler days
• Microclimates: Cooler and foggy or warmer and sunny in your garden?
• What do you want to eat? Don’t grow stuff you and your family hate!
• What is available? Seeds or 6 packs?
• Try new, unusual or expensive things.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Late Summer &amp; Fall: August - November</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plant Direct</strong></td>
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<td>Arugula</td>
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<td>Beets</td>
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<td>Cabbage</td>
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<td>Cauliflower</td>
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<td>Chard</td>
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<td>Kale</td>
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<td>Lettuce</td>
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<td><strong>Start Seeds Indoors</strong></td>
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<td>Mustard</td>
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<td>Onion sets</td>
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<td>Peas</td>
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<td>Potato</td>
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<td>Turnips</td>
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<td>Fava Beans*</td>
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<td><strong>Buy Plants at Nursery</strong></td>
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<td>Broccoli</td>
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<td>Brussel Sprouts</td>
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<td>Parsley</td>
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*Fall Fava beans are good eating in the spring and help enrich the soil as a cover crop.
Arugula –(Rocket)  It’s never a bad time to plant arugula!

- Cool weather is best
- Edible flowers
- Part sun/shade
- Consistent water
- Self sows

Salad

Pesto
Beets  Roots, Greens & Sprouts

Presoak seeds 24 hours
Direct sow ½” deep
“Snip” greens to thin"

*Beautiful with Scarlet Runner Beans in the spring
Cauliflower

White varieties should be blanched to maintain color (tie leaves over) and mild flavor 1 – 2 weeks before harvesting.

50 – 100 days
Needs fertilizer
Can be challenging

Roasted
Carrots – Lots of heirloom choices

• Direct sow
• Must have loose soil
• Even water

Roasted carrots

Can be raised in Grow Bags
Chard

Garden art: Red, green or multi-colored chard

Sauteed with lemon & garlic
Chicories: radicchio, curly endive, escarole

Eros OG Escarole: Johnny Seeds

Escarole for salads and soups

Radicchio
Kale — easy and versatile green for cooler weather

Great for sautés, salad or pesto

Red Russian

Tuscan Lacinato

For Powdery Mildew, try a home-made spray:
2 tsps baking soda
2 Tbls horticultural oil
3 drops dish liquid
1 gallon water
Mix well. Spray weekly to stop spread of mildew.
Lettuce

• Loose leaf is faster in cool season

• Romaine is heartiest:
  Flashy Trout Back in the foreground
  (always tender and delicious)
Mizuna

• A spicy Asian green
• Easy to grow year-round
• Adds pizzazz to mixed salads, stir fries and soups

Mizuna and cauliflower salad
Mustard Greens

- Prolific and so pretty in the cool weather garden
- Sow every few weeks

Giant Red

Sautéed mustard with garlic and lemon
Sugar Snap Peas

Direct seed 1”-2” deep, 2” apart or start indoors.
Put supports in early - 3’ tall for bush varieties, 6’-8’ for pole peas.
The trellis gives vertical and horizontal support (chicken wire or nylon mesh – 6” maximum)
Fertilize very lightly – they are a legume and will fix their own nitrogen.

Snow Peas
Onion sets

• Put in all the time, everywhere! (except near peas, beans & asparagus)

• Great pest deterrent

• Companion to lettuce, spinach & parsnips
Potatoes — Don’t be shy, grow your fries!

• Buy certified seed potatoes
• Plant in ground, boxes or grow bags
• Need cool temperature soil, prefer acid soil
• Best in loose, well-drained soil
• Plant in fall for spring new potatoes
• See Berkeley Hort website for growing tips*

  Plant small potatoes whole
  Cut larger pieces with 2-3 eyes each

*https://berkeleyhort.com/how-to/growing-potatoes/
Radishes

• Fast growing in cool weather
• Great fillers with almost everything
  (avoid potatoes)
• Tops make edible greens
• Harvest when tops pop out and are 1” across
• Try growing in egg crates, cut sections apart and pop each in the ground
Spinach

• Direct sow in cool weather
  Will bolt* in warm weather
  (*begins to produce seeds before harvest)

• Sow every few weeks

• Protect from snails & slugs
  (try cardboard collars from toilet tissue
   or paper towel roll), bottomless plastic cups
Turnips

• Fast and reliable
• Do well near carrots and radishes
• Tolerate some shade
• Sow every 2 weeks all winter for tops & roots

Purple Prince turnips
Resources

Edible Landscaping
Rosalind Creasy 2010
Eat your yard! Great resource for artful landscaping with edibles

Golden Gate Gardening
Pam Peirce
The bible of vegetable gardening in the San Francisco Bay Area

How to Grow More Vegetables
John Jeavons 2017
The grandaddy of organic gardening on a small but intensive scale. Great charts.

Local Nurseries

Seed Companies
Baker Creek
Johnny’s Seeds
Renee’s Seeds

Local Garden Club
Berkeley Garden Club
Resources: Most products are available on-line

LED Plant Lights

Jiffy plugs

Gopher Basket
Use 5 gal for tomatoes

Grow Bags
Available in many sizes
We use 10 gal.

2 ft Florescent Plant Lights

Plant Heating Mat
Resources: Most products are available on-line

- 5 foot Greenhouse
- Seed Tray and Cover Kit
- Plant Stand w/ Light
- Drip Irrigation Kit
- Moisture meter with 15” probe
- 3 in 1 Meter Moisture, pH, and Light