

The ladybug



A monthly vegetable gardening newsletter for Hidalgo County, TX

Fall Vegetable Garden

November 1st., 2020

A backyard garden is the perfect place to grow the ingredients for all of your favorite dishes, here are ten of the best vegetables to **grow this fall** in South Texas.

Lettuce: Lettuce is a healthful, fast grow leafy vegetable, and is packed with vitamins A and C, iron, calcium, and potassium.

Spinach: Spinach needs good sun, soil, and water to grow.

Tomatoes: Tomato plants need a lot of sun, so south or southeastern exposure are best. They also need good air circulation.

Cabbage Family: Most Texas soils provide a good environment for the cabbage family. They need well drained soil and ventilation.

Carrots: Can tolerate shade but prefer a lot of sun, water, and good soil conditions.

Onions: With a good air circulation, water, and raised planter beds, your garden has a good chance of producing many onions, as they grow very well in South Texas.

Radishes: As a root that does not handle high temperatures, fall and winter are often the best

seasons for radishes. Partial shade and just a little space are okay for these veggies.

Turnips: As a root vegetable, turnips do tolerate some shade, but will do best with at least six hours of sun a day.

Garlic: Garlic needs water and nitrogen supplemented soil, so be sure to provide your garden with enough of each. They also need full sun, so an east garden might be the best space for garlic too.

Growing your own produce can help with your appreciation for fresh foods and the intake of the nutrients your body needs from those foods.

Gardening is also a great way to get the whole family involved in the meal process—everyone can help care for the plants, harvest the crops, and prep the meals with your own homegrown food.



Did you know ... Cabbage family are heavy feeders?

Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts kohlrabi, collards and kale belong to the cabbage family or Cruciferous. These cool-weather crops are an excellent source of nutrients and help protect your soil from soil borne pest and diseases. However, they are heavy feeders, which means that they soak the soil out of nutrients. Because of this is very important that after you have grown these vegetables rotate with legumes like beans, peas, fava beans, etc. because these ones fix nitrogen from the atmosphere into the soil.



Using neem to organically control pest insects

Neem is a member of the Meliaceae family, its scientific name is *Azadirachta indica*. It is a potent tree and considered as a gift of nature, it originated on the Indian subcontinent and now it is cultivated worldwide. It has been used extensively by humankind to treat various ailments since prehistoric times. The bark, leaves and seeds are used to make medicines.

Neem is also used as an insecticide and insect repellent. It helps control leaf miners, aphids, borers and many other insects. To use neem as a spray insecticide, chop 2 lbs. of neem leaves, then soak them in a gallon of water overnight. You can also boil it for about 10 minutes. Let it cool, strain the soaked or boiled neem leaves. Add 10 drops of dishwashing soap to help stick the solution and it is ready for spray.

Neem can also be used to kill soil insects. Just chop the neem leaves, bury them into the soil up to one foot deep. On the first day, the small insects will disappear, after one week the soil will be ready for planting. Neem also helps to control nematodes and other pests in the soil.

Commercially, **neem oil** is available at garden centers where it can be purchased and be used as

an insecticide. Be aware that, since it is an oil, it might burn your plants if the temperature is too high. If this is the case, just spray it at night and remember to ALWAYS read the labels of any product and follow the recommendations of the manufacturer.



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This project is funded by USDA – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

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