

January 30, 2019

Spring (or Cool Season) Vegetable Gardening  
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It's January, and spring seems like it will never arrive. Now is actually the best time to get ready for our cool season vegetable garden. Growing a spring vegetable garden is a wonderful way to get out and enjoy mother nature after a long winter!

Planning your vegetable garden - Cool season vegetables are those that can thrive during the shorter days and cooler temperatures of spring when average temperatures are 55F to 75F and are usually tolerant of slight frosts. Vegetables usually need 7 to 8 hours of full sun daily. Cool season vegetables get by on 6, some can even be planted in partial shade. Plants in this group include root crops such as: beets, carrots, parsnips, radishes, and turnips; stems such as asparagus and white potato; leafy crops such as cabbage, celery, lettuce, onion, and spinach. There are also those plants whose immature flower parts we eat, such as broccoli, cauliflower, and globe artichokes.

Prepare for planting - While looking out the window at snow or the very cold ground, wondering what you can possibly do now to start your garden; place your seed order. When your order arrives, it may still be too early to plant the seeds outdoors, but many cool season vegetables can be started from seed indoors 6 to 8 weeks before the frost-free date in your area. Some transplants can be put out a few weeks before the frost-free date as well. Find your climate zone to learn the date of the last frost in your area: [What is my climate zone? - The California GardenWeb](#)

Caring for your vegetable crop - how do I grow...? Arugula, also known as rocket, is a simple seed to start in the early spring. Plant arugula from seed and enjoy it just 40-45 days later, ready to be whirred into pesto or wilted onto pizza. It can survive a light frost and its early flowers, delicate white and maroon, will tempt the first pollinators of springtime. Arugula is a lesser known cruciferous vegetable that provides many of the benefits as other vegetables of the same family, such as broccoli, kale, and Brussels sprouts.

Sow arugula from early spring to early summer. Space the seeds 1 inch apart and thin to 6 inches as arugula grows. Thinnings are delicious in salads. Water evenly and arugula will thrive in either the ground or a container. Arugula attracts pollinators in the early spring as one of the first vegetables to flower. If arugula bolts, you can eat the spicy seed pods; they'll perk up a spring salad. (Arugula's leaves, flowers, and seed pods are all edible.) Plant arugula in between rows of longer-maturing plants, such as carrots or squash, to maximize small garden spaces. To harvest, strip off the biggest leaves. For a second flush of growth, chop the whole plant to an inch or two above the ground, right above where the baby leaves appear.

Master Gardeners will host a spring vegetable session at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden at their February 9, Second Saturday/Open Garden Day. We will be talk about planting spring greens, including arugula, in raised beds and straw bales. Master Gardeners will be on site to answer questions about what to plant and how to care for your new plantings. The free class is 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Visitors are also welcome to the entire Garden on this date. Parking on

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campus is always \$2.

Each spring garden will be a learning experience. So, start planning, and enjoy your garden!



For information, review the FAQs at the California Garden Web:

<http://cagardenweb.ucanr.edu/Vegetables/>.

Spring and Summer Vegetables is the topic at this class. It's time to prepare the garden for the delicious spring and summer vegetables. Join Master Gardener Zack Dowell as he discusses garden plant selection, planting times, site selection, soil preparation, proper seed planting techniques, and pest management. This class is free and is 9am to noon at the Government Center Hearing Room, 2850 Fairlane Court in Placerville.

UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512). Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. Visit us at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, located at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville, behind Folsom Lake College – El Dorado Center. The garden is open on the second Saturday of each month, 9:00 a.m. to noon, till April 2019.

For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at [http://ucanr.edu/master\\_gardener\\_e-news](http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news). You can also find us on Facebook.