



Fall
& Home
& Garden

Best Crops for Fall

As the sun starts setting on another productive summer gardening season, it's time to turn your attention to your fall harvest.

That's right, you can grow bountiful produce in the cooler fall temperatures. The key to doing so is in the preparation you put into planning and readying your garden for planting.

There are many vegetable crop options that thrive in the cooler weather of autumn, so you can include fresh produce in your meals all season long.

Some fall vegetables even continue growing after the first frost. As long as you're prepared to check in on your crops during the cold weather months, it's time to start plotting your fall garden.

BEETS

Beets are about the most robust and resilient fall season plant you'll find. They are inexpensive and non-temperamental, making for a versatile option in your garden. Another way they are versatile is in how you can use both the root and the leaves for various recipes.

When planting these vitamin-rich crops, don't forget to dig deep so the plants stay cool. It's also recommended to not let the roots grow too long, as they

can toughen the beet and make it harder to cook.

CARROTS

Carrots are the favorite autumn crop of many because of their long shelf life — up to several months — and their crisp, vibrant textures.

In the southeastern or central parts of the country, consider planting your carrots in September and expect a late winter harvest. Let them grow to full size or pick them earlier at your convenience.

BROCCOLI

According to Organicgardening.com, broccoli is one of the best fall vegetables for the home garden. Broccoli stands up to pests and can flourish in the colder months, as well as in the springtime.

Rich in vitamins and minerals, broccoli can be started indoors from seed or planted outdoors.

You may have more luck growing broccoli indoors and transplanting it after a few weeks to help the plants stand up to the cooling temperatures in autumn.

Apple Pie Recipe

Is there anything better in the fall time than sitting down with a heaping hot slice of warm apple pie? Yeah, we didn't think so.

Making an apple is as easy as, well, pie. Follow the recipe below from Pillsbury to pull off your own version.

Don't forget to compliment your creation with a scoop of vanilla ice cream and cup of milk.

INGREDIENTS

Crust:

1 box Pillsbury refrigerated pie crusts, softened as directed on box

Filling:

6 cups thinly sliced, peeled apples (6 medium)
3/4 cup sugar
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 tablespoon lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.

Place 1 pie crust in ungreased 9-inch glass pie plate; press firmly against side and bottom.

In large bowl, gently mix filling ingredients and spoon into crust-lined pie plate.

Top with second crust.

Wrap excess top crust under bottom crust edge, pressing edges together to make a seal.

Cut slits or shapes in several places in top crust.

Bake 40 to 45 minutes or until apples are tender and crust is golden brown.

Cover edge of crust with 2- to 3-inch-wide strips of foil after first 15 to 20 minutes of baking to prevent excessive browning.

Cool on cooling rack at least two hours before serving.



Preparing for Winter

Another long mowing and landscaping season is almost in the books but that doesn't mean your work is over.

In fact, the key to a healthy year-round yard is in how you care for it during the fall and winter months. Ignoring your lawn when the temperatures change can mean even more work for you when the springtime rolls around again.

So get ahead of the game now to help yourself in the long run.

MOW & RAKE

Even when the cool air enters your neck of the woods, it's still necessary to continue mowing your yard. If your grass is still growing, you should still be mowing.

Raking and lawn sweeping your yard after you mow is necessary to prevent sun deprivation from impacting your yard. By neglecting the areas of your lawn with built-up grass on top, you're ensuring you'll end up with unattractive brown spots peppered throughout.

Keep the clippings in check by raking and removing your grass after every mow. This not only helps your lawn look great but prevents overworking your mower.

CREATE A COMPOST PILE

The fall season is an excellent time to start your own compost pile and can help you put your yard waste to good use.

Start a pile of green leaves, clippings and non-meat kitchen scraps close to your garden. Add a second layer of brown material such as garden soil, leaves and coffee grounds before adding another layer of greens. Finally, add some garden soil to the top and turn it throughout the season. You'll end up with a rich, black pile of fertilizer for next year's garden.

TEND YOUR GARDEN

You may think your gardening is done once you pull the last carrot or onion from the ground, but your garden needs regular maintenance just like the rest of your yard.

Remove any damaged annuals and clear out debris from flower beds. This freshens up the appearance of your garden and helps prevent mildew and mold from taking over.



Protect Pipes from Cold

Freezing pipes in the wintertime can be costly and dangerous to homeowners. What you do now in the fall can help avoid this problem.

The expansion of water when it freezes can put tremendous pressure on the pipes under your home, causing them to break.

Pipes that freeze are frequently the ones exposed to severe cold, such as outdoor hose bibs and swimming pool supply lines.

Pipes that run against exterior walls that contain little or no insulation also are subject to freezing, so it's important to know how your water lines are set up in your home.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

There are many steps to take both before and during cold weather to protect your pipes from freezing.

The most important thing is to have a plan in action. Know how your water lines are configured and which ones may be susceptible to damage.

Consult with a local plumber to conduct a run-through of your home. A licensed professional will be able to walk you through your situation and give you tips on where you need to focus your attention.

Here are some other helpful tips recommended by the American Red Cross:

- Remove, drain, and store



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hoses used outdoors. Close inside valves supplying outdoor hose bibs.

- Open the outside hose

bibs to allow water to drain. Keep the outside valve open so that any water remaining in the pipe can expand with-

out causing the pipe to break.

- Check around the home for water supply lines located

in unheated areas.

- Look in the basement, crawl space, attic, garage, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Both hot and cold water pipes in these areas should be insulated.

- Consider installing specific products made to insulate water pipes, such as a “pipe sleeve” or installing UL-listed “heat tape,” “heat cable,” or similar materials on exposed water pipes.

- Newspaper can provide some degree of insulation and protection to exposed pipes. Even ¼ inch of newspaper can provide significant protection in areas that usually do not have frequent or prolonged temperatures below freezing.

- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.

- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals out of the reach of children.

- When the weather is very cold outside, let the cold water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe — even at a trickle — helps prevent pipes from freezing.

Trees & Shrubs

Look around your yard. Do you see colorful trees and shrubs as the summer turns to fall? Are your eyes met with rich reds and fiery oranges?

If not, it's time to add some fall-inspired trees and shrubs to your landscape. Doing so requires some basic knowledge of your location's planting recommendations and the types of trees and shrubs that thrive there.

Spend a Saturday morning at your local nursery picking the brain of its expert owner. Ask questions about planting, maintenance and colors, and then make an informed decision about where some new trees and shrubs would fit best in your yard.

You'll be gazing into the vibrant glow of beautiful fall leaves and plants before you know it.

MAPLE TREES

Some trees are just made for the fall. Able to withstand colder temperatures and known for dazzling with bright leaf colors in the fall, maple trees can turn a hillside or backyard gorgeous shades of red, orange and yellow.

Some sugar maples can grow up to 75 feet tall and 40 feet wide, so know how much your yard can handle before digging your hole. Vine maples and Japanese maples can give you a smaller, yet just as striking, fall tree option.

POMEGRANATE

When it comes to smaller trees and shrubs, pomegranate offers a unique twist. Some varieties produce edible fruit in the fall, while others are strictly ornamental.

Know which kind you have before taking a bite. Some produce single colorful flowers that form fruit, but not the soft, juicy kind that you're looking for. Either way, pomegranates can give your garden or yard a burst of color just in time for the fall season.

BLUEBERRY

Speaking of colorful, how about adding a little blue to your life? Blueberry bushes continue to transform during the fall with leaves that turn yellow, orange or red.

Both the northern and southern varieties are eye catching because of their brilliant fall colors. There also are evergreen types that feature some leaves that turn red and others that stay green all winter.



The Garden Shed

Has your backyard shed become an eyesore? Are rusty metal or rotting wood the first things you notice when you head in for the mower?

Then it's time to spend some time rejuvenating it this fall. With less than \$100 and a creative eye, you can overhaul your favorite outdoor space into one you can be proud of.

Grab some paint and get ready to put in some elbow grease. You'll be showing off your shed makeover to anyone who comes for a visit.

ADD PAINT

Sometimes an outdated shed that has seen better days simply needs paint. Special metal paints can even cover up rusty areas that immediately draw your attention. Choose the color you'd like your shed to be and head down to the local hardware store.

Opt for tough exterior paint that can stand up to the elements, and don't forget a separate color for the trim work. Royal blue or dark gray is complemented wonderfully by pops of white door and window trim.

Consider matching your home's colors, too. If you recently re-sided your home with a new color, it may be time to make your outdoor structures such as garden sheds and barns match.

FOCUS ON THE INSIDE

Once the outside is swell,



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it's time to make sure you actually want to go into the shed. Incorporate shelving and smaller storage units to allow for more space. Hang your weed trimmer from the studs of the wall and organize your gas, oil and weed killer containers to free up floor space.

While painting the inside

of your shed probably doesn't make much sense, reinforcing it against the extreme hot and cold temperatures does. Add some standard insulation between the studs. Staple a plastic liner to the studs and enjoy a shed that's cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter months.

LANDSCAPE INTEGRATION

Pre-fabricated sheds are more popular than ever. You can buy them with wraparound porches, large interior space and even lofts. With some insulation and a power source, they can even serve as guest houses.

You can make them look even better by adding landscaping around them to make

them look like part of your yard. If your storage unit doesn't come with a deck, build a 6-inch platform. Add mulched flower beds around the edges of the shed to serve as bright, beautiful borders.

The more you treat your shed like an extension of your home, the better it will look in your yard.

Throw a Harvest Party

Are you looking for any excuse to throw a party? How about the change of the seasons? Say goodbye to summer's heat and hello to fall's treats with a fun harvest party at your home.

Invite your guests to dig into meals prepared with produce from your garden and desserts inspired by the cool, beautiful season.

Impress them with your attention to detail and creative infusion of fall's most prominent influences. The quintessential harvest party takes some careful planning and the perfect balance of fall foliage, friends and fun.

THINK PUMPKINS

Is there a symbol that better represents the fall season than the pumpkin? Utilize the brightness and shapes of pumpkins in your decorations, table centerpieces and even your dishes. Mix in some uniquely shaped gourds on the tables or deck areas to give party-goers something to talk about.

Fill a wheelbarrow with an assortment of pumpkins and gourds. If you have friends bringing over children, give the kids their own pumpkin to design or color. Pumpkins mean fun during your fall harvest party.

A GRAND ENTRANCE

You want your guests to realize they're at a harvest party from the minute they pull up in your driveway, so make your entrance grand.

Use autumn-shaded streamers to mark your mailbox or front gate. Hang cornucopia-inspired collections from your front patio or build DIY scarecrows out of straw and old shirts. Creatively arrange pumpkins, gourds,



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apples and leaves around your walkway and front steps to draw your guests into your harvest wonderland.

THINK FALL FOODS

What would a fall harvest party be

without the harvest?

Infuse your party with fall flavors and serve up recipes using the bounty from your garden or local farmer's market.

Find new fall recipes to try out on your guests — ones that include

apples, sweet potatoes or pumpkins. Find fruits such as peaches that hit their peak during the early fall months and incorporate them into tasty pies. Fall is the perfect time for a party to celebrate the new season with the ones you love.