



## Pre-seeding in Fall

Credit: <https://gardenerspath.com/plants/vegetables/pre-seed-fall/>

Nature is amazing. Plants grow, produce seed, and drop their seeds to make new plants. Seeds have incredible mechanisms designed to spread their seeds around. Some make parachutes or fluff to help them blow around. Others are eaten by birds and deposited far and wide. Some stick to what ever passes by to later fall to the ground. There are pods that twist to release the seeds, spreading them around. What ever the method, the seeds will eventually land on soil, some will germinate right away and some will need a period of cold or freezing followed by warming to start germinating.

We can take advantage of our winter's cold weather to plant now and grow later. Planting in the spring can be problematic, the weather doesn't always cooperate. It can be too wet to get an early start on preparing spring beds. Planting seeds now when the weather is too cold to stimulate germination, will allow the seeds to remain dormant through the winter, waiting to sprout as soon as the temperatures warm up in the spring. This method comes with some risks: animals may eat your seeds over the winter, unusual warm wet winters may make your seeds rot, or the spring weather may just not allow good growth of your seeds. If you have extra seeds this fall, why not try to plant a few and see what happens.

Garlic and spring flowering bulbs must be planted in the fall. There are a number of other plants, both vegetables and flowers, which do well planted before the ground freezes for the winter. Unsure if this works..... Think of the 'volunteers' that turn up in your garden from the compost or from just dropping to the ground. Seeds just seem to know when it is time to start growing in the spring, why mess with nature's plan.

While you prepare your beds for winter, select a well drained bed that will get full sun in the spring. Remove the weeds and old plants, add compost and if needed...lime. Remember, it is best not to turn your soil. This disturbs the micro organisms in your soil. Wait to plant your seeds until the weather stays near or below freezing, but before the ground freezes, and cover with 1-2 inches of straw or leaves. In the spring, once the seeds start to germinate, make sure you uncover them to allow them to get enough sun.

Here are some suggestions of vegetables to try planting. Basically try planting any seed that needs 'cold stratification (like milkweed), 'plant as soon as the ground can be worked', or can withstand spring frost. For example: Beets, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Mustard, Onions, Peas, Radishes, Spinach. Many of the perennial flowers and hardy annuals can also be planted in fall (calendula, poppy, lupin, columbine, coneflower, black eyed susan, wild flowers).