

NEWS RELEASE

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Vegetables for the Fall Harvest

One of my favorite vegetable eating combinations is the mix of cauliflower, broccoli and carrot. When you purchase these vegetables processed, it is often referred to as the California blend. Now is the time to start seeds of these vegetable crops along with beans and beets to create a Kansas blend.

Broccoli and cauliflower can be started from seed in the garden, but often it is planted already as a small plant. Starting these indoors ensures success. Beans, beets and carrots are directly sowed where they will grow to maturity. Fall seeding is different from spring. Plant the seed slightly deeper to ensure seeds don't dry out and the soil temperature won't be as extreme.

It is suggested to seed heavy and to do some thinning later to ensure an adequate stand. The seed will need to be kept moist which means frequent watering that typically forms a crust on the soil. To alleviate crusting, sprinkle a small layer of peat moss, vermiculite or compost directly over the seed row.

Carrots have some unique characteristics. They take 14 to 21 days to germinate. Most vegetables and weeds germinate sooner than the carrots. The soil needs to be loose to an 8 or 9 inch depth. Because of these challenges, I prefer to grow carrots in containers filled with weed free potting mix. Five gallon buckets work well for me.

The young tender seedlings in the fall have been nice juice morsels for feeding insects. I have needed the use of floating row cover to keep my young vegetable plants

from being harvested without my permission. Prepare for insect and small mammal issues before it is too late.

Fall vegetable gardening produces the best tasting cool-season crops of the year. There are several resources available for fall vegetable gardening. The “Kansas Garden Guide” has a chapter on “Fall Gardens” along with specifics on individual crops and much more. It is available from the local K-State Research and Extension office and on line at [www.ksre.ksu.edu](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu). At the same website, you can get the publication on “Fall Vegetable Gardens.”

You can find out more information on this and other horticulture topics by going to the Riley County, K-State Research and Extension website at [www.riley.ksu.edu](http://www.riley.ksu.edu). Gregg may be contacted by calling 785-537-6350 or stopping by 110 Courthouse Plaza in Manhattan or e-mail: [geyeston@ksu.edu](mailto:geyeston@ksu.edu).