

Gemma Alexander

Don't Put the Garden to Bed Yet | Earth911.com

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There is so much work to do in the fall putting the garden to bed for the winter. It can be a rush to get everything done before the first frost hits. Fortunately, you don't really have to. In many parts of the country, it's possible to grow vegetables year-round, and even in the coldest regions, you can stretch your growing season with a few simple tricks.

Season extension is exactly what it sounds like — gardening techniques that allow you to extend the length of the growing season by reducing wind exposure and warming the soil. With a little planning and careful plant selection, succession planting, sheltering, and mulch can help you extend your harvest into winter and jump-start your growing season next spring.

Timing

If you are like most American gardeners, you planted your vegetable garden in the spring and have already harvested most of what you grew. Conventional wisdom says that fall is the time to clean up the garden before heading indoors for the winter. But planting doesn't have to be a one-season activity. Through succession planting, you can extend the harvest for weeks or even months. Instead of planting your entire crop at once, plant smaller quantities a few weeks apart. The timing of each successive planting depends on how quickly each variety grows, counted backwards from your average first frost date.

