

Winter Vegetable Gardening in Houston and on the Gulf Coast

by **Dany Millikin**

**Host of HomeShow Radio and Conservation Program
Manager for The Memorial Park Conservancy**

Houston's winter has mild temperatures that bring out the best flavors in home vegetables. Pesky mosquitoes, weeds, and diseases are less bothersome. And we can grow some warm-season and most cool-season crops.

Warm-season vegetables are frost-susceptible so leave out the beans, cucumbers and summer squash that can't take cold during this winter season. They should go into your garden soon enough, joining February's planted tomatoes.

Frost-tolerant crops that need cooler conditions include beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, kohlrabi, lettuce, radishes, spinach and turnips.

Eight hours of direct sun daily is required, plant accordingly. Root crops (such as turnips) and leafy vegetables (like lettuce) tolerate some shade, but still need substantial winter sun. A southern exposure is best due to the angle of the sun. A garden that catches the early morning sun will dry more quickly, reducing the chance that harmful fungi or other diseases will develop.

- Good air circulation is important.
- Easy access to a water source makes gardening much easier.
- Success relies on an organic, loose and well-draining soil.



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- Mulch to conserve soil moisture, moderate soil temperatures and discourage weeds.

Nine winter crops that aren't too late to plant now

- Carrots, seed: mid-October-December, plant in groups so you don't have too much at harvest. Carrots take a long time to get edible.
- Collards, transplant: September-March, this fast-growing delicious leafy green is a nutritional powerhouse and can last all the way through spring.
- Lettuce, leaf, seed and transplant: late-September-April. Always be lettucing, that's my motto.
- Onion, transplant: mid-October-January. Tell me a vegetable you use more often.
- Peas, snap, seed: late-September-early February. Best to grow snap peas on a trellis, they can get a little birds nesting without.
- Radish, seed: September-February, very fast from seed to table. Great for kiddos
- Spinach, seed/transplant: October-November. I love growing spinach, easy to grow, easy use.
- Turnips, seed: September-February. If you pickle turnips are a must; grow for green and for roots. Most food per square foot of any garden food.

NOTE:

Hear Dany Milikin's [HomeShow Radio](#), Saturday mornings 7-9am on Sports Radio 610.

Access Dany's show archives at homeshowgardenpros.com/tag/dany-milikin/.