

# Winter Gardening Newsletter

by Linda Gilkeson

July 30, 2011

## Last chance winter crops; new gardening classes

July 30: Last chance winter crops; new gardening classes

This cool summer looks locked in, so I wouldn't wait a minute longer to sow leafy greens for winter harvests. It is too late to sow root crops (unless you want some salad radishes for this fall's salads), but you can still sow the larger leafy greens, such as kale, chard and leaf beet, Komatsuna, Chinese cabbage, etc. (people new to this list might want to look up my July 18 message for details on these crops: <http://www.saltspringenergystrategy.org/food.htm> ).

On Salt Spring, a good selection of seeds are still available at Foxglove Nursery (including SS Seeds, West Coast Seeds, Eagleridge, etc.) and from Eagleridge Seeds [see: [www.eagleridge-seeds.com](http://www.eagleridge-seeds.com)]. By the way, Foxglove is currently selling used burlap bags for \$1 each--great for shading summer seed beds until they germinate!

You can buy started plants at Foxglove nursery (kale, collards, Swiss chard, cabbage, hardy lettuce, kohlrabi are available right now; other plants in a couple of weeks), Chorus Frog Farm stand (on Rainbow Road), and at the Stowell lake farm stand (they are not having a special sale this year). After August 7, I would suggest that you only plant started transplants of the larger leafy greens as we are running out of summer (you can still direct sow hardy lettuce and corn salad later in August--more about this next time).

**Next week** is a perfect time to sow spinach (any variety). I always wait until the end of the first week of August as the days are short enough that hardly any plants bolt to seed. Those plants should produce a good crop for fall, some leaves over winter (more if they are in tunnels or coldframes) and a good, long spring harvest. Leave the plants in the ground no matter how beat up they look after winter--most will come back with a large crop of leaves, March through May.

**For all plantings:** Given the cool summer, it is more important than ever to grow plants as quickly as possible. This means being really on top of thinning (carrots & beets!) so there is no check in growth due to crowding. Also make sure plants are not stunted by lack of water or nutrients. For new gardens and leafy crops, you might want to water every week or two with liquid fertilizer. Make 'tea' from a shovel of compost or horse manure in a bucket of water, let stand for a couple of days, then strain and dilute it to the colour of weak tea to use on plants; or use fish fertilizer or other organic fertilizer according to directions on the bottle.

**For those of you inquiring about my upcoming gardening classes,** here are a couple to consider.

For anyone who would like to visit Salt Spring Island for a weekend: I am presenting one of the workshops in a new Arts in the Community program sponsored by the Salt Spring Arts Council (a brochure on other workshops in the series will be available soon at:

<http://www.ssartscouncil.com/programs.html>)

**Backyard Bounty: Grow the Most Food in the Smallest Space (with the Least Work) Nov. 5-6. Salt Spring**

I will cover soil preparation and organic fertilizers, planting schedules that produce the most from any garden space all year round, what to grow and how to grow it, simply and cheaply in this climate. I will include managing common pests without pesticides and how to minimize the need to weed.

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Starts Saturday, Nov. 5th, 10:00-3:00 pm and continues Sunday Nov. 6th, 9:00-1:00 pm. Cost \$145, which includes a catered lunch on Saturday. Limited to 25 participants. The class will be held at the Harbour House Hotel, which has an extensive food garden for demos. The hotel is providing a special discounted room rate for participants in the workshop <http://www.saltspringharbourhouse.com/> or you might want to stay at one of the many wonderful B&Bs on the island (see: [www.saltspringaccommodation.ca](http://www.saltspringaccommodation.ca)). To register for the class, contact me directly: [gilkeson@telus.net](mailto:gilkeson@telus.net) or 250-537-2503; payment is due by October 25th make cheques out to the 'SS Arts Council', but mail them to me: Gilkeson, PO Box 648, Salt Spring, BC V8K 2W2.

**An early head's up for my 2012 classes** based on my new book, *Backyard Bounty*--believe it or not people are already signing up!

Salt Springers might be interested in my 10-month gardening course:

**Year-Round Harvest** is sponsored by the Salt Spring Island Garden Club. This class runs once a month, 7-9:30 pm on a weekday evening from January through October. Dates to be established, but if you are interested in signing up or want more information, contact Susan Dann at: [susandann@shaw.ca](mailto:susandann@shaw.ca)

For Victoria folks, I will also be giving another 10-month course:

**Year-Round Harvest for the Urban Gardener** at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific. This one will run on Sunday afternoons (1:00-5:00 pm) once a month, January to October. For more information and to register contact HCP: [info@hcp.ca](mailto:info@hcp.ca) Phone: 250-479-6162.

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For info on my books [including my new best seller, **Backyard Bounty**, or to check my 2011 and 2012 schedule for talks and presentations in your area see: [www.lindagilkeson.ca](http://www.lindagilkeson.ca)

You can read all of my previous messages on the Salt Spring Energy Strategy website: [www.saltspringenergystrategy.org](http://www.saltspringenergystrategy.org)