

Scripps Miramar Ranch Seed Library

"Grow & Share"

Newsletter

4th Quarter '25

Fall & Winter Vegetables For Southern California

Southern California's mild climate means we have a fantastic array of vegetables we can grow in the Fall and Winter. Here are some excellent choices:

 **Leafy Greens:** These thrive in cooler weather and can be harvested repeatedly.

- Lettuce: Many varieties, from loose-leaf to romaine, do very well.
- Spinach: A cool-season favorite.
- Kale: Extremely hardy and nutritious.
- Swiss Chard: Adds beautiful color to the garden.
- Arugula: Grows quickly and has a peppery flavor.
- Mustard Greens: Another peppery green that tolerates cooler temperatures.

 **Root Vegetables:** The mild winters allow these to grow steadily.

- Carrots: Choose varieties suitable for your soil type.
 - Radishes: Fast-growing and great for quick gratification.
 - Beets: Both the roots and the greens are edible.
 - Turnips: Can be grown for their roots or their greens.
- Potatoes: Certain varieties can be planted for a winter harvest.

 **Brassicas (Cabbage Family):** These generally prefer cooler weather to form heads or florets.

- Broccoli: A classic fall/winter crop.
- Cauliflower: Needs consistent moisture and cool temps to head up.

- Cabbage: Many types, from green to red to savoy.
- Brussels Sprouts: A longer-season crop, but very rewarding.
- Kohlrabi: An interesting, mild-flavored stem vegetable.

 **Alliums:**

- Onions (sets or seeds): Can be planted in fall for spring harvest.
- Garlic: Plant cloves in the fall for a summer harvest.

 **Legumes:**

- Peas: Both snap and snow peas do well in cooler temperatures.

- Fava Beans: A great cool-season nitrogen fixer.

 **Herbs:** Many herbs continue to thrive or can be planted in fall.

- Cilantro: Tends to bolt in heat, so fall/winter is perfect.
- Parsley: Hardy and can last through the winter



A Note from the Garden

Welcome, fellow seed savers and gardeners! As the intense summer heat begins to fade, we enter the most dynamic planting season in Southern California. The mild, sunny days and cool evenings make autumn and winter the perfect time to grow a wide variety of cool-season crops. This information is dedicated to helping you transition your garden and save the bounty from your summer harvest. Happy planting!

What to Sow NOW in Southern California (Zone 9-11)

Forget the heavy frosts—our region's "winter" is prime time for greens and roots! Stop by the library to check out these seeds, perfect for planting from **October through December**.

Crop	Best SoCal Month to Sow	Tip for Success
Radishes	October - February	Plant small batches every two weeks for continuous harvest.
Spinach & Kale	October - January	Grow in partial shade if your area remains warm during the day.
Garlic	October - November	Plant cloves (purchased from a nursery, not the grocery store) point-up, 1-2 inches deep.
Snap Peas	October - December	Provide a trellis or support early on for climbing varieties.
Carrots & Beets	October - November	Sow seeds directly into deep, loose soil. Keep soil moist until germination.

Native Spotlight: California Poppies (Eschscholzia californica)

Now is the ideal time to direct-sow our state flower! Poppies thrive in the cooler, damp conditions we get this time of year and will reward you with brilliant color in the spring.

Seed Saving Corner: Summer's Bounty

If you grew **tomatoes, beans, or peppers** this year, now is the time to preserve those genetics for next spring! Saving seeds from your most successful plants helps create varieties that are perfectly adapted to our unique Southern California microclimates.

Quick Tip: Saving Tomato Seeds

- Select:** Choose a few perfect, ripe tomatoes from your best-performing plant.
- Ferment:** Scoop the seeds and the surrounding pulp/gel into a jar. Add a little water, cover with cheesecloth (or a coffee filter), and leave it on a windowsill for 2-4 days. A layer of mold/scum will form—this process breaks down the germination-inhibiting gel packet.

- Clean:** Skim off the scum. Pour the remaining contents into a strainer and rinse the clean, heavy seeds thoroughly under cool water.
- Dry:** Spread the seeds out on a paper plate (labeled!) for one to two weeks until they are bone-dry.
- Store:** Place dried seeds in a labeled, airtight envelope or container.

If you're new to Southern California, you might be looking at your garden beds and thinking it's time to pack it in for the winter. Think again! Here, in SoCal, October isn't the end of the gardening season—it's the beginning of our best one. The relentless summer sun has finally melted, the soil is still warm, and we're (hopefully) just a few weeks away from our first cleansing winter rains. This is the golden window for planting. Forget spring; for us, fall is for planting! This is the perfect time to visit the library, stock up on seeds, and get your hands in the dirt.

What to Plant Right Now

The cool, mild weather of a SoCal Fall and Winter are ideal for a variety of delicious crops that bolt or faint in our summer heat.

Now checking out from the seed library:

Leafy Greens: This is prime time for lettuce (romaine, butter, loose-leaf), spinach, arugula, kale (all varieties), mustard greens, and Swiss chard.

Root Veggies: Sow seeds directly in your beds for carrots, beets, radishes (they'll be ready in 30 days!), and turnips.

Brassicas: Get your starts or seeds in for broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, and cabbage.

Legumes: Peas (snap, snow, and shelling) love this weather. Fava beans are also a must-plant—they're delicious and fix nitrogen in your soil, preparing it for your tomatoes next spring.

Herbs: Cilantro, dill, and parsley thrive in the cool season.

Special Call: Sow Your Native Wildflowers! This is the single best time of year to sow California native wildflower seeds.

Scatter them in a prepared, weed-free area of your yard (or in a pot!) and let the winter rains do the rest. You'll be rewarded with a burst of color in spring that supports our local pollinators. We have: California Poppy, Arroyo Lupine, Phacelia - A bee favorite!



Seed Spotlight:

'Broad Windsor' Fava Bean: If you only plant one new thing this month, make it fava beans. This isn't just a food crop; it's a soil-building powerhouse. As a legume, it pulls nitrogen from the air and "fixes" it onto its roots. After you harvest the beans, you can chop the plant up and mix it into your soil as a "green manure" to feed your next crop.

How to Grow: Plant seeds about 1-2 inches deep and 6 inches apart. They grow into sturdy bushes.

How to Eat: Harvest the pods young and tender to eat whole (like a snap bean) or let them mature and swell, then shell them for the large, nutty beans inside.

Did you have a great summer crop of tomatoes, peppers, beans, or sunflowers? If you saved seeds (and made sure they are fully dry!), now is the time to bring them in. If you would like to donate your seeds, please label your donations clearly with the plant variety and year saved. Your saved seeds are what keep our seed library thriving!



Fall and winter are perfect for hearty and comforting vegetable dishes. Here is a recipe that highlights seasonal produce:

Roasted Root Vegetable Medley

This is super simple and incredibly flavorful. Roasting brings out the natural sweetness of root vegetables.

Ingredients:

- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
 - 2 parsnips, peeled and chopped
 - 1 sweet potato, peeled and chopped
 - 1 red onion, cut into wedges
 - 1 tbsp olive oil
 - Salt and black pepper to taste
- Fresh rosemary or thyme sprigs (optional)

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
 2. Toss all chopped vegetables with olive oil, salt, and pepper in a large bowl. Add rosemary/thyme if using.
 3. Spread the vegetables in a single layer on a baking sheet.
- Roast for 30-40 minutes, or until tender and slightly caramelized, flipping halfway through. Serve as a side dish or add a grain like quinoa for a light meal.



Scripps Miramar Ranch Library

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**Scripps
Miramar
Seed Library**

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