

FALL GARDENING IN CALIFORNIA



California weather is a lot different from the typical climate that other places around the world experience. It remains relatively warm throughout the year, and the winters aren't as cold as you'd expect; the same goes for fall. In fact, so favorable are the temperatures this time of year that many locals consider autumn to be the second chapter of spring. The summer fog clears up nicely, leaving behind a blanket of viridescent vegetation punctuated by colorful flowers jostling for sunlight and swaying to gentle winds. If you'd like to know how to make the most of this season, here are a few fall gardening pointers for your California garden:

1) Fall is an excellent time to plant vegetables

You'd think that the end of summer means it's time to hang up your trowel, but nothing could be further from the truth. Early fall is great for planting veggies such as radishes, potatoes, carrots, broccoli, lettuce, among others. The cool temperatures ensure the plants have the time they need to establish extensive roots while there's still more than enough sunlight to spare. Be sure to grow the plants in cell-packs to limit the effects of chilly nights.

2) And flowers

On the other hand, cool-season flowers perfect for fall include sweet alyssum, sweet peas, snapdragons, and pansies. It's also advisable to plant fall-blooming herbs such as basil and borage during spring so that by the time autumn rolls around, they are ready for the [honeybee frenzy](#). These furry insects are in peak activity during this season, gathering resources for the winter hibernation ahead. They help us out a lot with pollination, so it's only polite we return the favor.

3) Watch out for the slugs and snails!

The bug population dwindles with the onset of fall as they seek warm refuge elsewhere. However, their departure leaves room for some uninvited guests. Slugs and snails love the damp and chilly weather of fall, and they also have a penchant for succulent and budding vegetables. You'll need snail baits to keep the mollusks from taking over, or you can scour your garden at least twice a day and pick them off the foliage.

4) Ensure good drainage for your plants

Fall vegetables aren't too dissimilar from their summer alternatives in that they also appreciate well-drained soil. You can realize that by throwing out "used" soil and planting in perforated containers with fresh potting mixes. For a bed or ground planting scenario, a two-inch layer of mulch coupled with compost additions can improve aeration and moisture retention.

5) Have row covers at the ready

For windy or freezing nights, row covers can help keep your plants warm and safe. You can make your own from tablecloths and bedsheets but stay clear of plastic because of its harmful side effects.

6) Don't forget to take out the weeds!

Fall is perhaps the best time of year to weed. Any unwelcomed plant left to thrive in autumn may result in hundreds more when the weather heats up, so tackling the problem now saves you a lot of work later. However, be mindful of not pulling up flowering weeds that are beneficial to honeybees, such as dandelion and milkweed. These flowering weeds help aid our pollinating friends.