

A GARDEN CALENDAR FOR FALL

Harvest oregano, thyme, sage and marjoram for drying.

Pour white wine vinegar or rice vinegar over harvested tarragon, basil and other ephemeral herbs, then seal in jars for gifts.

When nights begin to get chilly, it's time to pick basil pronto – cool temperatures will turn leaves dark and alter its amazing flavour. Make pesto for the freezer, or seal in canning jars. Substitute lightly toasted pecans or walnuts for pine nuts. Enjoy with pasta, chicken and fish all winter long. Or simply preserve the basil for later: whirl the leaves in a blender or food processor with a little water or olive oil. Freeze in ice-cube trays, then store in freezer bags.

Make tomato jam (visit Sharon's blog for the recipe!), or can tomatoes and make salsa. Dry tomatoes in a food dehydrator or oven to store in your fridge or freezer. For extra flavourful sauce, grill tomatoes briefly on the barbecue, then transfer onto foil and cook through, cool and freeze or process in cans.



Zucchini again? Instead of eating it every night, blanch briefly and freeze.

Winter squash can be harvested this month or early October before heavy frost once it's a deep, solid colour and the rind is hard. Using a sharp knife, cut the squash from the vine, keeping some stem attached. Store in a dry cool basement or cellar, keeping squash from touching. You may wish to wipe it with a solution of 5 ml (½ tsp.) bleach to 500 ml (2 cups) water to minimize rot.

Kale is the unsung hero of the vegetable garden. Full of nutrition, self-seeding and self-sowing – it's especially yummy after being kissed by frost.

If squirrels are rampant and love to dig your bulbs, try this British trick – place your bulb, cover lightly with soil, grate a few shavings of Ivory or other mild bar soap on top, then cover with soil.



PLANT BROAD BEANS THIS MONTH

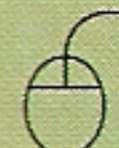
Nasturtium lovers take note – these are an excellent trap crop for aphids and you can still eat the beans!



Contained BEAUTY

Looking for a super easy idea for a lively flower arrangement? Simply intersperse *Calibrachoa* hybrids 'Superbells® Dreamsicle' with 'Superbells® Red' around the edge of a medium-sized container for a vigorous and eye-catching balance of colour. Lasting from spring until fall frosts, *Calibrachoa's* prolific blooms do not require deadheading and are irresistible to hummingbirds. Its one weakness is its susceptibility to root rot, so allow the planting to dry out between watering. For a dramatic centre point to the arrangement, add *Carex flagellifera* 'Graceful Grasses™ Toffee Twist'. Hardy to zone 7, it can eventually be transplanted into the garden in warm zones. Cut it back in spring, leaving one-third of the plant, and divide in spring or fall. – Eric Greene

PHOTO courtesy Proven Winners



FOR MORE CONTAINER RECIPES, go to www.gardenwiseonline.ca/containers