

Winter Gardening Newsletter

by Linda Gilkeson

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Ben Luna and Kiki Roumel are planning to start selling their winter vegetable starts at the Tuesday market this week and probably the following week. They have 4 varieties of purple sprouting broccoli, 8 varieties of winter cauliflower, 4 varieties of winter cabbage and a few other things, such as Pentland Brig kale. These varieties of broccoli and cauliflower stand in the garden through the winter and start producing heads from February onward (depending on the variety and how sheltered your garden is). They are not the same varieties we grow for summer and fall harvests. The seed came from Great Britain and most varieties are not available from seed houses in Canada so this is a great opportunity to try some new crops.

If you don't know where to put your winter crops because your garden is full right now, you may want to make a special nursery bed to hold the plants for a few more weeks. Once garlic, early peas and lettuce, storage onions and other early crops finally finish up you can move the transplants to the empty beds. Or, if you are growing cucumbers or melons, you might have enough space between plants to interplant your winter crops. Cabbage family plants do quite well with the shading from low growing vines around their roots as long as the plants are not set too closely together.

Don't forget to put paper barriers for cabbage root maggot around the stems when you set out the plants. Cut 6 to 8 inch squares of heavy Kraft paper or tar paper or use several layers of newspaper. From one edge, cut a slit to the centre of the square, then cut a tiny X at the centre so that you can slip the paper around the stem (the paper lies down flat on the soil). Anchor the paper down with a couple of pebbles or with mulch to hold it in place. Leave this barrier in place for the life of the plant.