

# Winter Gardening Newsletter

by Linda Gilkeson

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## **For Salt Spring readers:**

Our local Thrifties now has some really nice flats of winter lettuce and other greens. I was happy to see that they have the 'right stuff': 'Winter Density' lettuce, 'Continuity' lettuce, collards, kale, 'Tyee' spinach, 'Purple Cape' cauliflower. It is getting late to plant, but the plants are well-grown so if you set them out immediately they should do well--especially if you grow them under plastic tunnels, in cold frames or an unheated greenhouse.

The plants came from a supplier in Victoria ('Sea to Sea' I believe) so my Victoria readers may also see seedlings from this supplier in local stores.

## **For everyone:**

The rains are coming soon, so it is time to pull late onions to cure and dig potatoes while the soil is still dry. For those growing sweet potatoes ('yams'), the cool nights will put an end to growth so you can go ahead and harvest.

## **September insect problems:**

-Never fear, leaf-chewing caterpillars are about to disappear as the last ones mature and crawl away to hibernate.

-Some gardens still have cabbage aphids on broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and related plants. It is a good idea to blast aphids out of the forming Brussels sprouts with a stiff stream of water so that they don't distort sprout development. Because aphid colonies at this time of year are full of natural enemies, I don't try to control aphids on other plants. I want as many aphid predators as possible to survive (late aphids also help harden off new shoots of young fruit trees before winter). Aphids will soon disappear anyway as they die off before winter.

-If your beet greens or Swiss chard leaves have brown blotches on them, that was caused by beet leaf miners. They had time to squeeze in another generation with the warm weather this month. As with leaf-chewers, the leaf miners are mostly done feeding now. You might see tiny, chalk-white clusters of eggs on the undersides of leaves right now. Although not likely to get very far this late in the year, it is a good idea to brush the eggs off or wash them off to avoid new damage.

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