

Winter Gardening Newsletter

by Linda Gilkeson

July 23, 2009

Seeding Winter Greens, Plant & Seed Sales

The last week of July through the first week of August is a good time to seed many different kinds of hardy greens for winter harvest:

arugula, mizuna, collards and the many varieties of kales, leaf mustards, Komatsuna (AKA mustard spinach), spinach (any variety), Chinese cabbages and other Asian greens. Also, if you like winter radishes (daikon) or want to try getting very early onions next spring, now is a good time to seed these as well.

Given the forecast for extremely hot weather over this weekend and early in the week, I am going to hold off seeding until after the heat wave passes (and all of these greens grow best in cooler weather). I mentioned covering seedbeds until they germinate in my last message, but just to clarify as I had some questions: I soak the soil well after seeding, then cover the beds with newspaper, burlap or other heavy cloth until the seeds germinate. I usually don't have to water them again for 3-4 days (check for germination after 4-5 days as things will come up very quickly in this weather). When you do have to water, remove the covers, water the soil and replace the covers until seeds germinate. In hot weather tiny seedlings appreciate protection from the heat, especially in mid-day. Those plastic latticework trays for seedling flats work well, turned over seedlings to provide partial shade. Branches, laths, strips of cloth are also fine as long as the seedlings can get some sunlight. Once plants are a couple of inches high they will benefit from being well mulched to keep their roots cool and moist.

Salt Spring Island Gardeners: Seed Sale

A nice selection of interesting seeds for winter harvest is now available from Marsh Goldberg: Eagleridge Greenhouse Gardens, 219 Eagleridge Drive (home of the SS Seed Sanctuary).

Here is a partial list: Komatsuna; Tatsoi; He Shi Ko Onion; Extra Dwarf Pak Choy; Ching Chiang Bok Choy; Japanese Giant Red Mustard; Chinese Kale-Kailaan Queen; Wrinkled Crinkled Cress; Variegated Cress (perennial); Sylvetta Arugula (perennial); Giante d'Italia Parsley; Russian Red Kale; Lacinato Kale; Indian Mustard; Chicory-Grumolo Verde; Seven Top Turnip (for leafy production)

She has a Lettuce Mix with a selection of cutting leaf lettuce. Can be direct seeded for fall harvest or grown under cover for late winter harvest. Also Tom Thumb and Little Gem mini-varieties, which she says "grow very quickly and love fall conditions. Also ideal for cold frames and cloches for early starts next spring and container gardens on decks".

Seed Packets are \$3.00. Call Marsha Goldberg at 537-5677 or email her at seedkeeper@telus.net She will be happy to arrange a time for you to pick up seeds. Some varieties are available in larger sizes and there are many other varieties in smaller quantity. She invites you to make an appointment and while you are there tour their seed farm garden.

Victoria and Saanich Peninsula Gardeners: Plant Sale

The Haliburton Community Organic Farm will be offering a large selection of fall & winter plants & perennials for sale on:

August 7 & 8th and August 14 & 15 Time: 11:00 am to 5:00 pm

Address: 741 Haliburton Rd in Cordova Bay off Hwy. 17.

To learn more about the farm see: http://www.haliburtonfarm.org/about_us.html

West Coast Seeds: New Planting Chart

Check out the colourful foldout winter crop planting chart from WCS, wherever their seeds are sold or available from them directly. Note the WCS farm store is open Monday-Friday only for the rest of the year.

www.westcoastseeds.com

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Misconception of the week: I couldn't resist!

Two different people in the space of a day told me they had been told by someone else to stop watering their potatoes now. You don't want to do that! It is the driest summer on record for many areas, potatoes need a lot of water, and we have two months to go until late potatoes are harvested. Uneven watering makes the tubers grow unevenly, so the spuds may be distorted and scarred by splits (some varieties are worse than others for weird growth due to uneven watering). Good idea to check that the soil is well hilled up around the stems so that no shoulders are poking through and turning green; a thick mulch is always a good investment.

For those of you inquiring about buying my books, there is ordering information posted on my web site:

www.lindagilkeson.ca

You can read all of my previous messages on the Salt Spring Energy Strategy website:

www.saltspringenergystrategy.org