

**J**ack Frost may be nipping at your nose, but the garden is tugging at your mind. There are things to be done to guarantee a successful vegetable garden for the new season.

The easiest place to start would be cleaning up all the raised beds. Weed it, till it and compost it, and get it ready to select your winter vegetable plants and seeds. Work in any soil amendments you prefer such as composted cow manure, cottonseed meal and a quality slow release fertilizer.

The winter months in Houston yield the same Cole crops as in northern states. We just have to start earlier as our growing season is shorter due to the heat. The lists I have assembled are some of the most popular vegetables, herbs and fruits appropriate for a January garden. More varieties become available in the following months. Cole crops are essentially the hearty winter vegetables that can endure the colder temperatures and light frosts.

Those that are in the plant column can be planted directly in the ground. The seeds can be started out doors (with the exception of tomatoes) by following your seed package instructions. The lettuce, spinach and even carrots may be sowed. They need a lot of light to germinate but will flourish.

The key to your success is to keeping your eye on the weather report. You must have protection ready in the event of a forecast of temperatures below 32 F. Consider frost cloth to wrap larger plants, or hay for smaller seedlings and vines emerging. Sowed seeds need a removable cloth because of their need for light. Do not use any form of plastic for protection as it will freeze anything it touches. Water the soil (not the plant) prior to the frost as freezing water will generate heat.

Work quickly and cleanly as February will have projects for the entire yard!

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<b>Plant</b>	<b>Seed</b>
<b>Vegetables</b>	
Beets	Tomato (start indoors)
Broccoli	Sugar Snap Peas
Cabbage	Spinach (sow seed)
Cauliflower	Snow Peas
Collards	Lettuce (sow seed)
Multiplying Onions	Carrots
Strawberry	
<b>Fruit Trees</b>	
Bareroot	
Apple	
Peach	
Plum	
Pear	
Nectarine	
Blackberry	
Blueberry	
<b>Herbs</b>	
Leek Sets	Parsley
Chervil	Nasturtium
Garlic Sets	
Rosemary	
Sage	
Thyme	

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- If time does not permit to spend time in the garden yet or you feel the weather may still be a threat, you can roll this over to February and knock of two months in one.
- Or if you do not have the space or lighting for germinating seeds, wait until February to buy plants.
- January and February are essentially focused on your vegetable garden. The major yard clean-up and pruning begins Valentine's Day. More on that next month.