

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office*



PHOTO CREDIT: Herman Auer

**Cooler mornings in October will make it a joy to get out and work in the home vegetable garden. Several delicious and nutritious vegetables can be planted now and will thrive in Gulf Coast fall gardens including cauliflower (shown above).**

At last, real fall weather conditions have arrived to start the week and cooler temperatures will grace our area for more than a day or two. Cooler mornings in October will make it a joy to get out and work in the home vegetable garden.

Experienced gardeners know that an amazing variety of vegetables can be

grown here during the cool season from October through early April. And these cool-season vegetables include some of the most delicious, nutritious and popular ones around.

Broccoli is an easy-to-grow and productive fall vegetable. Transplants can be planted now through mid-November. Space plants 12 to 18

inches apart in rows or beds. The 12-inch spacing will produce smaller heads, but total production is greater because you have more plants.

Broccoli heads are harvested when the largest flower buds in the head are about the size of the head of a kitchen match. After the main head is harvested, the plant will



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Dr. William Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit his website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>.

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produce side florets, and harvesting can continue for several weeks, often doubling the production of each plant.

Cauliflower transplants should be spaced 18 to 24 inches apart; spacing closer than 18 inches will greatly reduce the size of the head. Cauliflower produces only one head, so after harvest, remove the entire plant to make way for something else.

For white heads, blanch the cauliflower by pulling the leaves up over the head when it is about the size of a golf ball. Fasten the leaves with a clothes pin and check the head frequently. Harvest before the curds of the head starts to separate.

Other related vegetables include cabbage, kale, kohlrabi and collards. All of these can be planted from seed or transplants now through February.

Garlic may be planted now through November. Break the bulb into individual cloves, and plant them by pressing the big end down, pointy end up into a prepared bed. The tip of the garlic should be about one-quarter inch below the soil surface. Space the cloves 4 to 6 inches apart in rows spaced about 15 inches apart. Garlic is a slow growing plant and the 15-inch space between rows can be used for intercropping.

Intercropping is a term used when two or more different vegetables are grown in the same space at the same time. Garlic plants will not need the 15 inches between the rows for several months, so a quick-

growing vegetable can be grown in that area and harvested before the garlic needs it.

Good choices would include radishes, leaf lettuce, beets and spinach. These vegetables are not large growers and will be harvested long before the garlic is ready next May.

Intercropping may also be done with other vegetables that are initially spaced far apart, such as cabbage and cauliflower.

Root crops are also excellent for the cool-season vegetable garden. Plant the seeds rather closely to make sure you get a good stand.

Once the seeds of root crops come up, the seedlings must be thinned to the right spacing, or the roots will not develop properly. Some commonly planted root crops and the proper spacing are: beets, 3 to 4 inches; radishes, 2 to 3 inches; turnips, 3 inches; carrots 2 inches; and rutabagas, 4 inches.

If you seek rapid gratification or feel gardening is a challenge then try radishes—they are easy to grow and some varieties can be harvested just 22 days from planting.

Other vegetables that can be planted this month include cabbage, carrot, celery, Chinese cabbage, collard, endive, kale, leek, lettuce, mustard, onion, peas (English and snow), rutabaga, shallot, Swiss chard and many herbs, such as thyme, sage, rosemary, oregano, French tarragon,

chives, cilantro, dill, mints and parsley.

#### At a Glance

**9:00 - 11:00 A.M., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26:** Master Gardeners will conduct a plant sale at the Discovery Garden located in Carbide Park (4102 Main Street, La Marque). A variety of plants remaining from the Annual Fall Plant Sale will be available at discounted prices including citrus trees, perennials and vegetable transplants for planting in the fall vegetable garden.

**1:00 - 3:00 P.M., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28:** Seminar on Monarch Butterflies & Milkweeds presented by Barbara Willy, Executive Director and Founder of Monarch Butterfly Gateway. Discussion topics include the importance of monarchs to our ecosystems, preservation, and conservation, creating a contiguous pollinator habitat across the coastal and central flyways of Texas and the significance of milkweed to monarchs. Conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park (4102-B Main Street, La Marque). Preregistration requested (e-mail [galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com) or phone 281-309-5065)

