

Planting for the Fall

Consider these cool-season crops to fill your fall benches.

By Jeannine Bogard

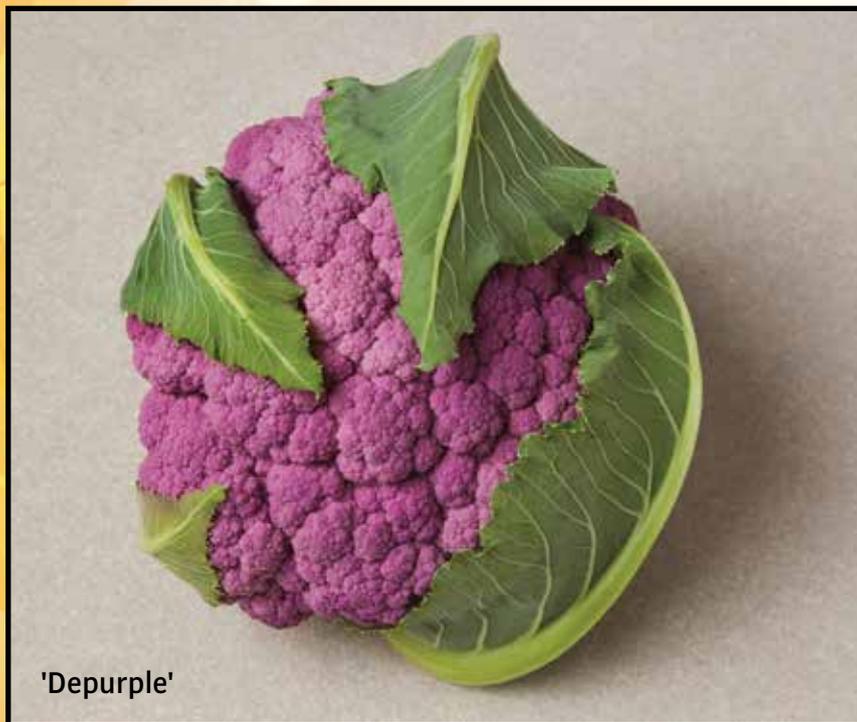
Though fall may seem a long way off, the time to sow for fall harvest is May to early August. When back-to-school promotions appear, retailers should begin offering large packs and pots of vegetable transplants.

The workhorses of the cool season crops are brassicas, which include kale, chard, collards, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower and cabbage. Brassicas are easy to grow and fun to watch growing in the garden.

Recent breeding efforts in the brassica classes have focused on heat and stress tolerance under different environmental conditions, improving the consumer garden experience when the transplants are set out in mid to late summer. Longer maturing crops often tolerate frost and have the potential to extend the last harvest into the fall holiday season. For those fortunate to live in a mild winter region, cool-season vegetables can be offered nearly all winter long, with the harvest window stretching to early spring.



'Clementine'



'Depurple'

Cauliflower

This year's high demand is colored cauliflowers, which come in shades of purple, lavender, and orange. Depending on the variety, a head of cauliflower can be ready for harvest 68-90 days after transplant to the garden.

'Clementine' is new to the home garden market this season and exhibits deep orange curds. 'Depurple', with its beautiful lavender-pink curds, provides a nice contrast to 'Clementine'.

Fun fact: The carotenoids in orange-colored cauliflower are not affected by cooking, and the curds will retain their beautiful color.

On the other hand, the anthocyanins in purple cauliflower are water soluble and will lose their brilliant color when boiled or blanched. A splash of lemon juice before cooking may help retain the color.

Broccoli

First introduced to America by Italian immigrants, broccoli continues to gain popularity year over year. It's very easy to grow in the home garden under cooler conditions; some varieties even produce secondary flushes of florets.

There are many types of broccoli to offer, including crown, broccolini, broccoli raab and sprouting types. Exhibiting early maturity and good heat tolerance, 'Monflor' produces a flat, loose head with florets on long stems that separate easily with just one cut for quick kitchen prep.

Cabbage

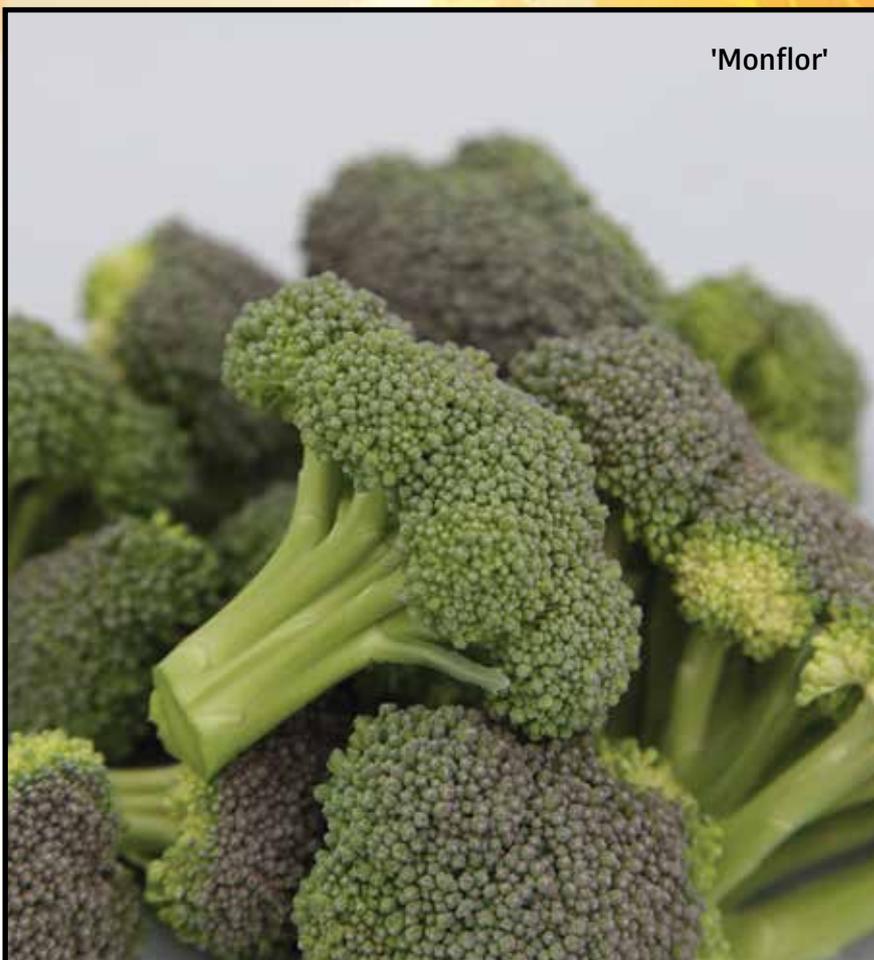
Cabbage is a versatile crop that is becoming more popular with increasing interest in making one's own kimchi, sauerkraut, coleslaw, or stir-fries and grilling. Cabbage comes in a variety of shapes, including rounded, flat, and pointed heads with green or red leaves. Specialty types include Savoy, Chinese and Napa cabbages, which tend to be more tolerant of hot weather.

Kale

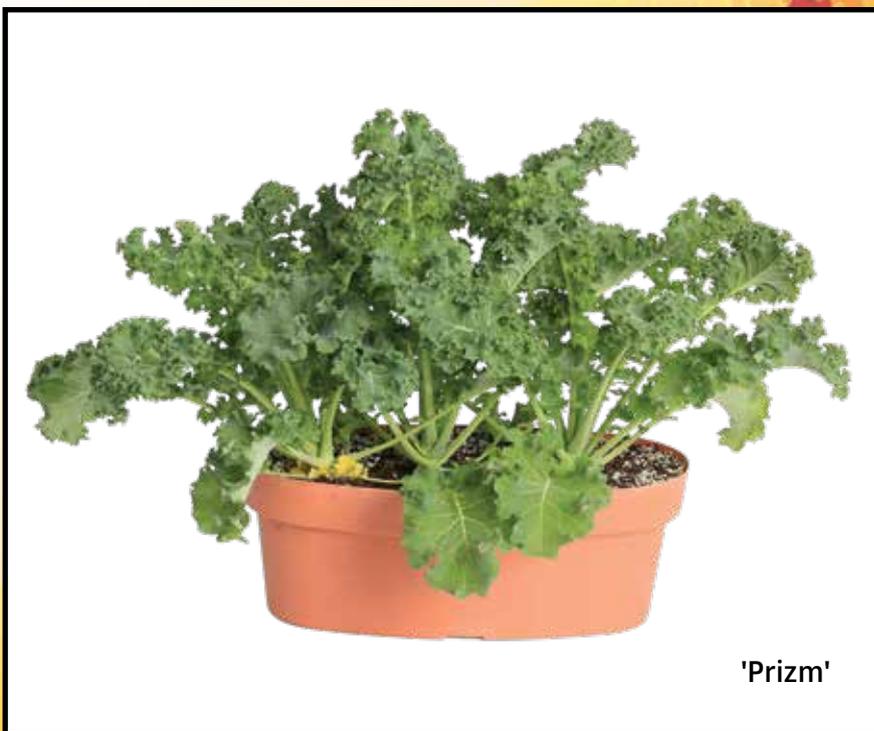
Not to be confused with ornamental kale bred for its ornamental leaves, culinary kale can still add visual interest to the plate, with its textured or curly leaves that come in a range of sizes and colors. Kale leaves become sweeter and nuttier in flavor when they mature under cooler temperatures, and some claim the best flavor emerges with a light frost. Because kale leaves are harvested from the lower portion of the stalk, kale will continue to produce new leaves all season long.

'Prizm' is an All-America Selections winner that adapts well to containers and window boxes in addition to in-ground planting. 🍷

Jeannine Bogard is home and garden vegetables business manager at Syngenta Flowers.



'Monflor'



'Prizm'