



Succession Planting for a Fall Harvest

I have enjoyed learning to garden with my new raised beds. The hot days have forced me to water every few days. I have my tomatoes planted in 5-gallon buckets and large tubs this year, so I am checking soil moisture often and doing some fertilizing as well. I had to remove the fabric from my low tunnel after discovering that a head of cabbage had actually “cooked” in the heat. Discouraging, but also a lesson on when to check the crops under the tunnel. I am picking cucumbers, radishes (which I am roasting in the oven), the Kale is winding down, the Green Beans are blooming, and the peppers are looking great!

Now it is time to plan for a Fall harvest. Succession sowing means introducing seeds in intervals as plants mature and naturally decline in productivity; this allows growers to strategically stagger harvests and increase yields. I have been waiting for my Green Beans to bloom before I stuck more seeds in the ground, and now with the heat, I will have to water them daily until they germinate.

A recent Hudson Valley Seed Company newsletter explains, “Succession sowing is one of the best ways to develop a relationship with your garden. As you kneel down to sprinkle in a new row of lettuce or sneak in some cucumber seeds along the fence, you might find someone has been nibbling your cabbages or perhaps the snap peas are perfect for plucking. What will you leave and what will you snip? How are all your early springtime plans panning out? Succession sowing gets you back into the garden, so that you never miss a beat. All the processes of sowing, weeding, harvesting, and feeding are opportunities to observe and listen to your garden throughout the growing season. Spending this peaceful time observing and learning will make you a better, more intuitive gardener. Succession sowing is a perfect excuse to linger in the garden; it sounds so “productive”, yet it is ever so easy and relaxing. Maybe the best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago, but the right time to sow a seed can still be now.”

What am I planting? Bush Green Beans, Radishes, Kale, Swiss Chard, lettuce, Dill, Parsley and Basil. I might throw some other seeds in

the ground just to see if they will make it to maturity before the first frost!

I have a new gadget that I have been trying this summer that helps me plant in “patches” as described in the Square Foot Gardening books. It is called a Seeding Square and I love planting with it! It takes the guess work out of planting depth and distance. I love trying out new things in the garden and seeing what works and what doesn't.

Have you tried anything new this year? Be sure to write in your journal so that you remember it for next year!