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It's quiet. Eerily quiet. No Wii battles. No Harry Potter marathon. No endless rationalizing about why we need a horse.

Except for the dogs' whining, the only sound is the chirping of birds. With the balcony door wide open, the cool 64 degree breeze is airing out the house from the smell of bacon and pancakes.

How can today be the first day of school?

Seriously, I'd like to time travel back to the end of May and enjoy another summer vacation with the kids. Instead, we're back to reality. Schedules, enforced bedtimes, and homework just aren't as much fun as Scrabble tournaments, beach trips, and after dark swim-fests.

In a blink of an eye, summer vanished. In a blink of an eye, my babies are now a college senior, a sixth grader, and a second grader.

Impossible.

While I wallow in mom-angst, I must get busy. Although summer doesn't end until September 22, it's time to prep for fall gardening.

Honestly, I'm ready to rip out the summer garden. By late July, the garden looked ratty. Fortunately, it still produced well, which is the point of a vegetable garden, isn't it? Still, I dreaded when a friend or acquaintance wanted to visit the garden. By August, the plants looked so horrific that I found it difficult to visit the garden. The wilting tomato vines and spotty, overgrown cucumber plants depressed me. So now, here we are, August 20, and I have no qualms about ripping out the ugliness to replace it with lovely, fresh cool weather crops.

The problem is?I need to grow my fall garden transplants.

Yesterday, I spent three hours scrubbing seed trays. Naturally, the seed trays should be washed, bleached, rinsed again, and put away after spring planting. In an ideal world, I would open the greenhouse and find immaculate seed trays awaiting seed starting mix and seeds.

But this is my world.

Instead, my back aches from Saturday's marathon tray scrubbing session while the kids played in the pool.

Next time, child labor may be involved.

Now that the trays are clean and disinfected, it's time to check the planting schedule.

The most important consideration when planning your fall garden is: when is the first frost expected for your area? If you don't know the approximate frost date, you can contact your local extension service or enter your zip code [here](#) [1].

In our area, we expect frost by mid October?approximately October 15.

For a few of the veggies I plan to add to the garden, like Brussels sprouts for Peter, I'm a little behind schedule. But Brussels sprouts actually taste better after exposure to frost, so I might be OK. I hope.

Because I'm starting the fall garden from seeds, it's important to consider how long each variety takes for germination, as well as days to harvest. Although cool season crops can survive some frosts?and even freezing temperatures with protection?the plants need to be established and mature before the first hard freeze.

Today, because I'm in the thick of seed starting, I thought I'd share the following information for your use when planning your fall garden. Visit [Growing Days](#) [2] to find a table will give you an idea of how long it will take for your cool weather veggie seeds to germinate, what temperature and depth is best for germination, and how long until your crop is ready for harvest. (For some reason, the table wouldn't import into the KGI blog. Sorry for the inconvenience.)

What are you planning to grow in your fall garden? Any favorites, or are you trying some new varieties? And?as always, if you have any questions about starting your seeds, please let me know!

Happy sowing!

XO ~

Julie

[Growing Days](#) [2]

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[1] <http://davesgarden.com/guides/freeze-frost-dates/>

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