

# Pacific Northwest Moon Gardening Guide

Seasonal Gardening by Moon Phases in the Pacific Northwest

■ PLANT BY THE MOON · GROW WITH THE SEASON



# What Is Moon Gardening?

An ancient, observational practice — moon gardening aligns your planting calendar with the natural rhythms of the lunar cycle. Rooted in biodynamic tradition and centuries of agricultural wisdom, it's a seasonal, intuitive approach to growing.

## The Core Idea

- Ancient planting tradition dating back millennia
- Lunar cycles influence soil moisture and plant energy
- Inspired by biodynamic gardening principles
- Connects gardeners to seasonal natural rhythms

## How It Works

- Root crops thrive during waning and dark moon phases
- Leafy greens respond to waxing and full moon energy
- Timing transplanting around peak lunar hydration
- Complements — never replaces — soil and climate care



# Understanding the Moon Phases

Each phase of the lunar cycle creates a distinct gardening window. Learning to read the moon transforms your garden timing from guesswork into a graceful, natural rhythm.



## New Moon

- Best for sowing leafy greens
- Moisture retention phase
- Ideal seed germination window



## Waxing Moon

- Strong upward sap movement
- Great for annuals and herbs
- Supports above-ground growth



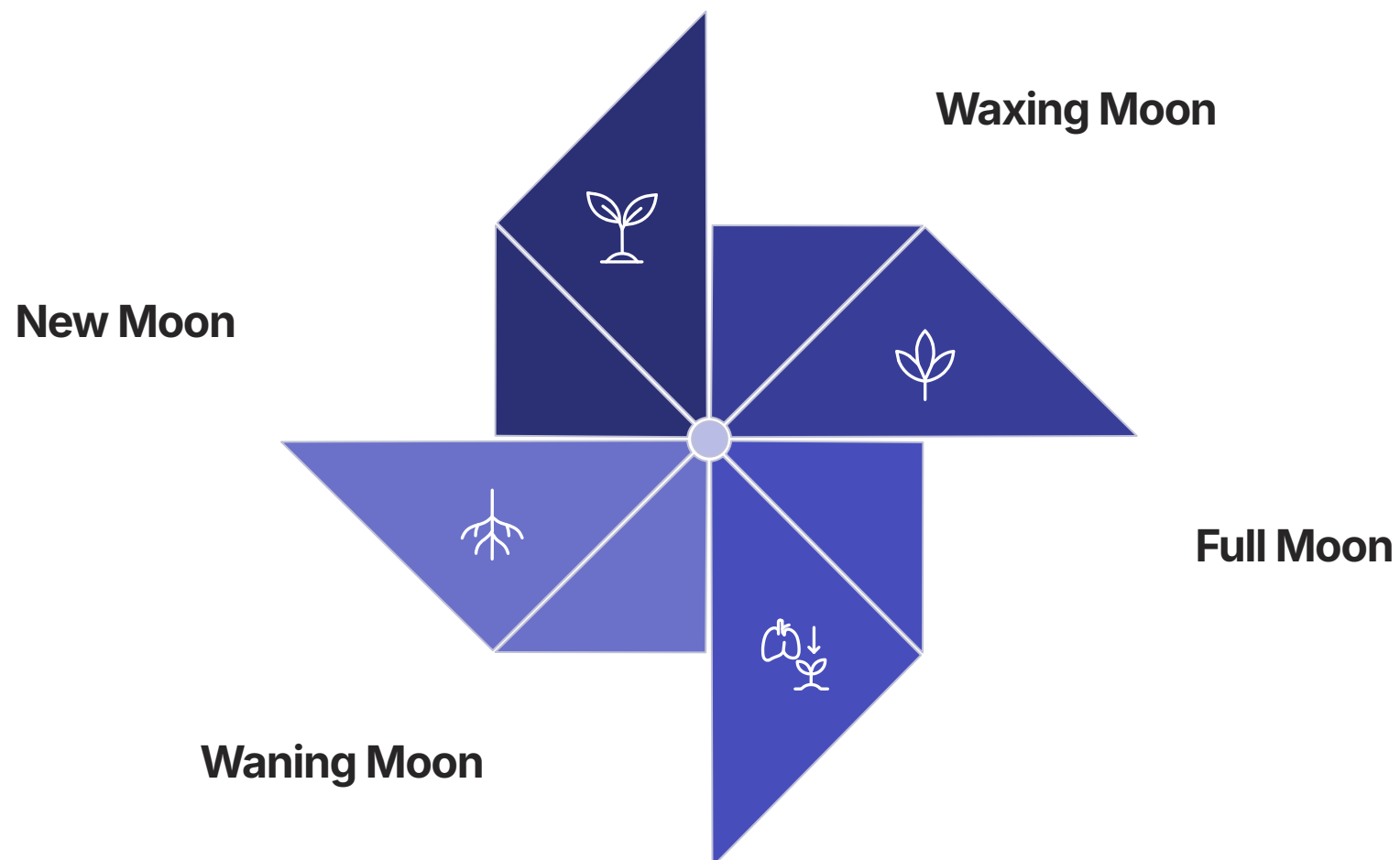
## Full Moon

- Peak plant energy and hydration
- Prime transplanting window
- Harvest for maximum vitality



## Waning Moon

- Root development focus
- Best for pruning and dividing
- Ideal for root crops and soil work



# Pacific Northwest Gardening Climate

The PNW offers one of the most nuanced and rewarding gardening climates in North America — if you understand its layers. From the rain-soaked valleys west of the Cascades to the drier, sunnier zones to the east, each region demands a tailored approach.

## West of the Cascades

- Mild, wet winters with rare hard freezes
- Cool, gradual springs ideal for cold-hardy crops
- Dry summers — irrigation becomes essential
- Long growing season in USDA Zones 7b–9a
- Excellent drainage critical to prevent root rot

## East of the Cascades

- Colder winters and hotter, drier summers
- USDA Zones 4b–7a — greater frost risk
- Lower rainfall — drip irrigation essential
- Native pollinators abundant in dry meadow zones
- Shorter but intensely productive summer season

# Spring Planting Guide

 PNW SPRING SEASON

Spring in the Pacific Northwest is a study in patience and precision. As soil temperatures climb past 40°F, the garden awakens — and moon timing gives your earliest sowings a meaningful edge.



## Early Spring Crops

- Peas — direct sow March-April
- Lettuce & spinach — succession plant every 2 weeks
- Kale & chard — cold-tolerant, sow under new moon
- Radishes — fastest return, 3–4 week harvest



## Moon Phase Timing

- Sow leafy greens at new or waxing moon
- Start seeds indoors 6–8 weeks before last frost
- Transplant seedlings around the full moon
- Last frost in Western WA/OR: mid-March to mid-April



## Companion & Pollinator Plants

- Calendula — repels pests, attracts beneficial insects
- Nasturtiums — companion to brassicas
- Native violets — early pollinator support
- Sweet alyssum — ground cover and nectar source



# Summer Gardening Guide

■ PNW SUMMER SEASON

## What to Grow

- Tomatoes — warm-season anchor crop
- Basil — plant near tomatoes for mutual benefit
- Zucchini & cucumbers — prolific producers
- Beans, corn, and squash ("Three Sisters")
- Sunflowers — pollinator magnets

## Summer Care & Moon Timing

- Deep, infrequent watering encourages root depth
- Mulch heavily — PNW summers can be surprisingly dry
- Harvest fruiting crops at or just after the full moon
- Manage pests with companion planting and neem oil
- Succession sow every 2–3 weeks through July

# Fall Gardening Guide

 PNW FALL SEASON

Fall is the most underrated season in the PNW garden. As the rains return and light softens, it's time to put the garden to bed — and set the stage for next year's abundance.

## Plant Now

- Garlic — plant October under waning moon
- Cover crops: crimson clover, winter rye, fava beans
- Root vegetables: turnips, parsnips, carrots
- Hardy greens for winter harvest windows

## Soil & Infrastructure

- Amend beds with compost and aged manure
- Install rain catchment and overflow drainage
- Mulch perennials before first frost
- Begin hot composting with fall leaf matter

## Perennial Maintenance

- Cut back spent perennials — leave some for birds
- Divide overcrowded clumps during waning moon
- Plant native shrubs and berry canes while dormant
- Note what worked — adjust for spring planning



# Winter Gardening Guide

## ■ PNW WINTER SEASON

Winter in the PNW garden isn't silence — it's a quiet hum of preparation. The soil rests, the planner fills up, and the greenhouse becomes your most beloved room in the house.

### Active Growing

- Greenhouse herbs: cilantro, parsley, chives, mint
- Bare root planting: roses, fruit trees, berry canes
- Winter greens under row cover or cold frames
- Microgreens and sprouts indoors

### Rest, Plan & Prep

- Fruit tree pruning during waning moon — January ideal
- Order seeds early — popular varieties sell out fast
- Soil rest allows beneficial microbiome to rebuild
- Review moon calendar and map beds for spring layout

# Best Plants for Moon Gardening in the PNW

These are the Pacific Northwest's most reliable performers — each with a preferred planting season and a lunar sweet spot for sowing, transplanting, or harvesting.



## Leafy Greens

- Spinach, arugula, Swiss chard, kale
- Best season: spring & fall
- Moon phase: new to waxing moon



## Root Vegetables

- Carrots, beets, radishes, parsnips
- Best season: spring & fall
- Moon phase: waning to new moon



## Culinary Herbs

- Basil, thyme, rosemary, lavender, dill
- Best season: spring to early summer
- Moon phase: waxing moon



## Pollinator Flowers

- Calendula, echinacea, borage, phacelia
- Best season: spring through fall
- Moon phase: waxing to full moon



## Native PNW Plants

- Camas, red flowering currant, salal, Oregon grape
- Best season: fall & early spring
- Moon phase: waning moon (establishment)

## Berry Plants

- Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, marionberries
- Best season: plant fall or early spring
- Moon phase: full moon for transplanting

# Companion Planting & Natural Ecosystems

The healthiest PNW garden isn't a monoculture — it's a living ecosystem. Companion planting builds soil fertility, reduces pests organically, and creates sanctuary for the native species that keep the whole system humming.



## Pollinator Support

- Plant native flowering species in every bed border
- Avoid pesticides during bloom periods
- Include early- and late-season nectar sources



## Soil Health

- Cover crops fix nitrogen and prevent erosion
- Compost feeds microbial communities
- Avoid tilling — preserve fungal networks



## Beneficial Insects

- Ladybugs, lacewings, and parasitic wasps control pests
- Attract with dill, fennel, and yarrow
- Avoid broad-spectrum sprays that harm allies



## Biodiversity First

- Mixed planting disrupts pest cycles naturally
- Native species support native wildlife webs
- A diverse garden is a resilient garden

# Month-by-Month PNW Garden Calendar

A seasonal at-a-glance guide — moon phase aware, climate-specific, and designed for the Pacific Northwest growing year.

Month	Plant / Sow	Maintain / Harvest	Moon Focus
Jan	Bare root trees, indoor herbs, microgreens	Prune fruit trees, plan beds, order seeds	Waning moon for pruning
Feb	Peas (direct), onion seeds indoors, spinach	Prep raised beds, top-dress with compost	New moon for sowing
Mar	Lettuce, kale, chard, brassica starts indoors	Weed early, install drip irrigation	Waxing moon for transplants
Apr	Potatoes, more lettuce, herbs outdoors	Harden off starts, watch for slugs	Full moon transplant window
May	Tomatoes (after May 15), basil, beans	Succession lettuce, feed with compost tea	Waxing moon for annuals
Jun	Cucumbers, zucchini, squash, sunflowers	Mulch, water deeply, thin seedlings	Full moon harvest begins
Jul	Late beans, succession greens, fall brassicas	Harvest tomatoes, beans, herbs daily	Waning moon for root crops
Aug	Kale and chard for fall, garlic prep	Preserve summer harvest, compost spent plants	New moon for fall sowing
Sep	Cover crops, overwintering greens, carrots	Collect seeds, final tomato harvest	Waning moon for root work
Oct	Garlic, native bulbs, bare root berry canes	Mulch beds, install rain catchment	Waning moon for planting roots
Nov	Bare root shrubs, fava beans	Clean tools, amend soil, rest beds	Dark moon — soil rest
Dec	Plan next season, order rare seeds	Greenhouse herbs, holiday wreaths	New moon intention setting

# Tools & Garden Essentials

The right tools — paired with thoughtful setup — make every season more joyful and productive. Invest once in quality; your garden will reward you for years.



## Hand Tools

- Hori hori knife
- Hand trowel
- Soil knife



## Raised Beds

- Cedar or composite
- 12–16" depth ideal
- Weed barrier liner



## Composting

- Tumbler or open bin
- Hot compost system
- Worm composting (vermicompost)



## Irrigation

- Drip irrigation lines
- Rain barrels
- Soaker hoses



## Seed Starting

- 72-cell seed trays
- Full-spectrum grow lights
- Heat mats for germination



## Soil Amendments

- Organic all-purpose fertilizer
- Kelp meal and worm castings
- Biochar for water retention

# Frequently Asked Questions

Curious about moon gardening in the Pacific Northwest? Here are honest, practical answers to the questions gardeners ask most.

## Does moon gardening really work?

Evidence is largely observational and traditional, but many experienced gardeners report improved germination and harvest quality when timing aligns with lunar cycles. It's a gentle supplemental practice — not a guarantee.

## What grows best in the PNW?

Leafy greens, brassicas, root vegetables, herbs, berries, and native perennials all thrive here. The mild, wet climate favors cool-season crops above almost anything else.

## When should seeds be started indoors?

Most starts begin 6–8 weeks before the last frost — typically late January through March in western Oregon and Washington. Check your specific USDA zone for precision timing.

## Best moon phase for root vegetables?

The waning to dark moon phase is considered optimal. As lunar energy draws downward, it's believed to support root development and tuber formation.

## Can moon gardening work in containers?

Absolutely. Container gardeners can follow the same lunar timing for sowing, transplanting, and harvesting. Just be mindful of soil moisture — containers dry out faster.

## Is this the same as biodynamic gardening?

Moon gardening shares roots with biodynamics, but biodynamic practice is more comprehensive — including soil preparations and cosmic calendars. Moon gardening is an accessible entry point into that philosophy.

 **A Note on Gardening Expectations**

Gardening success varies based on climate, soil quality, weather patterns, elevation, and seasonal variability. Moon gardening is a traditional and observational planting method and should be used as a **supplemental gardening practice** rather than a guaranteed agricultural system. Always adapt guidance to your local conditions, microclimate, and personal experience.

# Important Notes

## Your Garden Is Unique

Microclimates, slope, sun exposure, and soil composition vary enormously even within a single neighborhood. Trust your observations alongside any calendar system.

## Weather Always Wins

Unexpected late frosts, drought, or heavy rain will always override any planting schedule. Build in flexibility — and enjoy the beautiful unpredictability of growing things.

## Moon Gardening Is a Practice

Like all good things in the garden, this deepens over seasons, not weekends. Keep a journal, note your observations, and let the practice evolve with you.

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# Connect with Amanda Hagen

Whether you're relocating to the Pacific Northwest, exploring Oregon Wine Country, or putting down roots in the Portland Metro area — Amanda brings deep local knowledge, genuine care, and personalized guidance to every conversation.

## Phone

503.744.7557

## Email

[amanda@amandahagen.com](mailto:amanda@amandahagen.com)

## Instagram

@amandahagenrealestate

## YouTube

@amandahagenrealestate

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