

Seasonal Gardening Guide

Planting, Harvesting & Garden Planning Through the Year

A year-round handbook for Pacific Northwest home gardeners — from first frost to full bloom, raised beds to container gardens, beginner tips to harvest-ready wisdom.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST LIVING

AMANDA HAGEN



At a Glance: Your Garden Year

Everything you need to know — seasons, crops, garden types, and beginner tips — in one quick overview.



Best Seasons

- Spring & Fall: cool-season crops
- Summer: warm-season abundance
- Winter: planning & indoor growing



Warm-Season Crops

- Tomatoes, Peppers, Zucchini
- Cucumbers, Basil, Beans
- Squash, Corn, Melons



Cool-Season Crops

- Lettuce, Spinach, Kale
- Peas, Carrots, Broccoli
- Garlic, Root Vegetables



Flower Windows

- Spring: Tulips, Pansies, Daffodils
- Summer: Sunflowers, Lavender
- Fall: Mums, Asters, Marigolds

Raised Beds

Ideal soil control & drainage

Container Gardens

Perfect for patios & small spaces

Vertical Gardens

Maximize walls & fences

Edible Landscapes

Beauty meets backyard bounty



CHAPTER 1

Spring Gardening Guide

March through May — the season of fresh starts, cool soil, and the year's first harvests.

Vegetables to Plant

- Lettuce & Spinach
- Kale & Chard
- Peas (direct sow)
- Carrots & Radishes
- Broccoli transplants

Flowers to Plant

- Tulip & Daffodil bulbs
- Pansies & Violas
- Sweet Peas (early spring)
- Foxglove seedlings

Garden Prep Checklist

- Amend beds with compost
- Test & adjust soil pH
- Clear winter debris
- Set up drip irrigation



Spring Tip: In the Pacific Northwest, soil temps must reach at least 40°F before direct sowing. Use a soil thermometer for best results — don't rush the season!

Summer Gardening Guide

June through August — peak growing season, harvest abundance, and outdoor living at its best.

Summer Vegetables

- Tomatoes (all varieties)
- Peppers & Eggplant
- Cucumbers & Zucchini
- Green Beans & Corn
- Basil & Summer Herbs

Summer Flowers

- Sunflowers & Zinnias
- Lavender & Echinacea
- Dahlias & Cosmos

Care Essentials

- Water deeply 2–3x per week
- Mulch to retain moisture
- Monitor for aphids & slugs
- Pinch herbs to prevent bolting
- Harvest regularly to encourage yield

Pollinator Tips

- Plant lavender near vegetables
- Avoid pesticides during bloom
- Include native wildflowers

Fall Gardening Guide

September through November — harvest season, soil restoration, and planting for next spring.

Fall Planting Opportunities



- Garlic (plant in October)
- Cover crops: clover, rye, vetch
- Root vegetables: turnips, beets
- Hardy perennials & bulbs

Garden Cleanup Checklist

- Pull spent summer annuals
- Cut back perennials (leave some for birds)
- Turn and refresh compost bins
- Apply 2–3" of mulch to beds

Soil Restoration

- Add compost before first frost
- Sow cover crops to prevent erosion
- Protect raised beds with row covers
- Note what worked — plan improvements

  **Pacific Northwest Fall Window:** Many PNW gardeners enjoy a second cool-season harvest well into November. Don't close up shop too early — kale, chard, and spinach thrive in the fall chill.

Winter Gardening Guide

December through February — rest, restore, and plan for the season ahead.

Indoor Growing

- Herb gardens on sunny windowsills
- Microgreens & sprouts year-round
- Start seeds indoors (Feb)
- Greenhouse growing for greens

Pruning & Maintenance

- Prune fruit trees (dormant season)
- Shape ornamental shrubs
- Cut back ornamental grasses

Planning & Organizing

- Order seed catalogs & browse varieties
- Sketch next year's bed layout
- Organize seeds by season
- Review what thrived & what didn't

Tool Care

- Clean, sharpen, and oil hand tools
- Store hoses indoors to prevent cracking
- Inspect raised bed structure
- Restock soil amendments early



Month-by-Month Planting Calendar

A quick-reference guide to what to sow, plant, harvest, and tend — every month of the year in the Pacific Northwest.

Month	Plant / Sow	Harvest	Prune / Feed	Key Task
Jan	Indoor herbs, microgreens	Winter greens	Fruit trees	Order seeds, plan beds
Feb	Onions, leeks (indoor)	Kale, chard	Roses, shrubs	Start seeds indoors
Mar	Peas, spinach, lettuce	Overwintered crops	Perennials	Amend soil with compost
Apr	Carrots, kale, broccoli	Spring greens	Hedges	Set up irrigation
May	Tomatoes (transplant), basil	Lettuce, peas	Feed beds	Harden off transplants
Jun	Cucumbers, peppers, beans	Strawberries, herbs	Pinch herbs	Mulch beds deeply
Jul	Succession lettuce, beets	Tomatoes, zucchini	Side-dress tomatoes	Water deeply, watch pests
Aug	Fall kale, broccoli (transplant)	Corn, peppers, cucumbers	Deadhead flowers	Harvest & preserve
Sep	Spinach, arugula, radishes	Winter squash, garlic	Prune shrubs lightly	Plant cover crops
Oct	Garlic, tulip bulbs	Root vegetables	Cut back perennials	Add mulch to all beds
Nov	Overwintering greens	Late kale, chard	Fruit trees (start)	Clean & store tools
Dec	Microgreens (indoor)	Indoor herbs	Dormant pruning	Rest, reflect & plan

Gardening Essentials for Beginners

Start simple, grow with confidence. These fundamentals will set you up for a thriving, joyful garden from day one.



Essential Tools

- Hand trowel & cultivator
- Pruning shears & hori hori
- Watering wand & hose
- Raised bed soil & compost



Sunlight Rules

- Full sun: 6+ hours daily
- Part shade: 3–6 hours
- Track sun patterns before planting
- South/west exposure is ideal





Soil Basics

- Use quality raised bed mix
- Add compost every season
- Aim for pH 6.0–7.0
- Never compact wet soil



Watering Basics

- Water deeply, less frequently
- Morning watering is best
- Drip irrigation saves time & water
- Check soil moisture — don't guess

  **Top Beginner Mistakes:** Overwatering, planting too close together, skipping compost, and starting too many crops at once. Start small — even one raised bed done well beats five beds done poorly.

Raised Bed & Container Garden Ideas

Small space? No problem. These design approaches maximize every square foot — from compact patios to full backyard edible landscapes.



Modern Raised Beds

- Cedar or composite lumber
- 12–18" deep for root crops
- Fill with 60% topsoil, 40% compost



Container & Patio Gardens

- Tomatoes, peppers, herbs thrive
- Use large pots (5+ gallon)
- Ensure drainage holes in every pot



Vertical Gardens

- Grow cucumbers & beans on trellises
- Wall-mounted herb pocket planters
- Ideal for small patios & fences

Drip Irrigation

Saves 30–50% water vs. sprinklers

Herb Gardens

Basil, rosemary, thyme & mint

Edible Borders

Blend beauty with productivity

Garden Paths

Gravel or stepping stone walkways

Frequently Asked Questions

Quick, honest answers for new gardeners getting started in the Pacific Northwest.

What's easiest for beginners to grow?

Lettuce, radishes, zucchini, herbs (basil, chives, mint), and cherry tomatoes. All are forgiving, fast-growing, and highly rewarding for first-timers.

How much sunlight do vegetables need?

Most vegetables need 6–8 hours of direct sun daily. Leafy greens tolerate partial shade (3–4 hrs). Always observe your yard's sun patterns before planting.

How often should I water?

Water deeply 2–3 times per week in summer. In spring and fall, reduce to 1–2 times. Always check soil moisture 1" below the surface before watering.

What grows best in cooler climates?

Kale, spinach, chard, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, leeks, and carrots all thrive in the cool, damp Pacific Northwest climate and can handle light frost.

Are raised beds worth it?

Absolutely. Raised beds warm up faster in spring, drain better, require less weeding, and give you full control over soil quality — ideal for PNW clay soils.

How do I improve soil quality?


Add 2–3" of compost each season, use cover crops in fall/winter, minimize tilling, and test soil pH. Healthy soil is the foundation of every great garden.



A Note About Your Garden

Gardening success varies by climate, soil conditions, sunlight exposure, and seasonal weather patterns. Plant selections and timing should always be adjusted for your local growing zone.

The Pacific Northwest spans a wide range of microclimates — from rainy coastal valleys to drier inland zones. USDA Hardiness Zones 7–9 cover most of western Oregon and Washington. Always consult your local extension office or zone map when making planting decisions.

 **Find Your Zone:** Visit the [USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map](#) or contact your local OSU/WSU Extension office for hyper-local planting guidance tailored to your neighborhood and elevation.



Need Gardening Inspiration or Outdoor Living Ideas?

Let's connect — whether you're planning your dream garden, exploring outdoor living spaces, or looking for lifestyle inspiration across Portland Metro and Oregon Wine Country.


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How Amanda Can Help

- Pacific Northwest lifestyle insight
- Outdoor entertaining & garden spaces
- Home buying in Portland Metro
- Oregon Wine Country living
- Seasonal home & garden guidance

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