

## Season's right for planting vegetables

Remember when the pandemic started? Many of us took the opportunity to start a new hobby, such as gardening. Well, it has almost been a year now. Are you still keeping up with your gardening?

Many probably gave up because vegetable gardening in El Paso is hard, especially in the spring and summer. The spring winds dry up new seedlings, and the hot summer temperatures are brutal to plants, not to mention the impact of bugs. However, do not give up because fall and winter gardening in El Paso offer the best conditions for your veggies to succeed.

Gardening offers several benefits. It takes us outdoors, and if we have been staying home, gardening is a great way to get moving and get some needed sunlight and fresh air. For our plants, the cooler temperatures of fall and winter minimize water loss to evaporation. In El Paso, the mild winters prolong the growing season.

What can we grow in the fall and winter? Broccoli, cauliflowers, cabbage, lettuce, carrots, beets, onions, and more. For those of us who are cooking more meals at home because of quarantine, think of the prospect of adding home-grown vegetables to your ingredients.

Not a fan of veggies? Try planting some flowering pansies and violas. The colorful flowers will bring a smile to family and neighbors.

Even though the winter air is drier, plants usually experience slower growth rates, and many go dormant (i.e., Bermuda grass). Less water is needed during this time.

### Winter gardening tips:

- Pay attention to any frost warnings, especially if you have plants in the ground or are planning to transplant seedlings. Use mulch to protect and insulate in-ground plants, and wait to transplant any seedlings.
- Avoid watering when temperatures are 40 degrees or below; wait until mid-day when temperatures are higher, allowing water to soak in.
- Do some cleaning up by removing dead branches from plants. Since many plants have lost their leaves, you can easily see what needs to be removed. Cut back your perennials and roses if you haven't already done so. Remove old brown stems and leaves. Remove debris from last season to give your garden a fresh winter look.

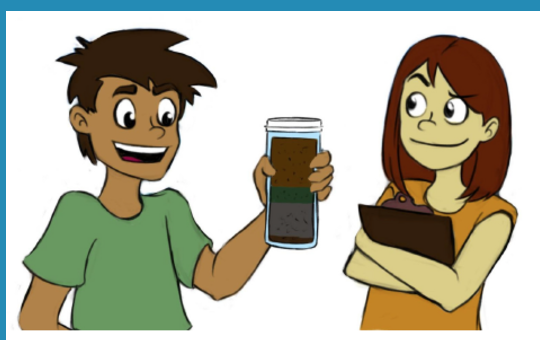
### Winter conservation tips:

- Don't forget to protect exposed pipes using foam insulation. If you have a water feature, such as a fountain, make sure you emptied it during the cold weather months.
- Watch for wet spots in your landscaped areas that might indicate a leak in your irrigation system. Roots from trees or weather can contribute to damage. Repairs will save water and money.
- Install a low-flow showerhead. Having a high efficiency showerhead is a very practical way to reduce consumption.



## El Paso Water and Science

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