



# NYC LOCAL FOODS



## AUTUMN

**Broccoli (also summer):** Broccoli grows well in cool climates, though it is sensitive to frost. Extremely hot weather is definitely its enemy. Early spring and late fall are the best seasons for growing broccoli, when it isn't hotter than eighty degrees and not colder than sixty-five degrees.

**Brussels sprouts:** They are best if they are planted in late spring to mid-summer so they can take advantage of the fall frost which actually improves their flavor, making them taste milder. If you plant them too early and they mature during hot weather, they are likely to be bitter.

**Celery:** Celery thrives in cool, moist locations. It tolerates light shade better than most crops, but it should receive at least a half day of sun. Celery grown in complete shade tends to be lanky. In mild climate zones, celery can be grown as a fall and winter crop. Make sure the soil is rich, and well-composted.

**Wild rice:** Soft sediment is the best soil for wild rice. These conditions exist along river banks or near the inlets of lakes. The water must be clean and not cloudy or filled with waste run-off or algae. You may need to remove competing plants such as cattails. Bottom-land or marshland that can be flooded is also perfect for growing wild rice.

**Concord grape (also summer):** This type of grape tolerates a wide range of soil conditions, but must have good drainage. They're good for home gardens because it is a reliable producer and a vigorous grower. Grapes need full sunlight and high temperatures to ripen (usually ripen in late September), so plant on southern slopes, the south side of windbreaks, or the south sides of buildings.

**Nectarines:** The ideal soil is a sandy loam (sediment, silt and sand). Plant nectarine trees in areas receiving full sunlight and avoid areas with poorly drained soils. Planting sites should be higher than surrounding areas so water will drain away from trees.

**Persimmons (also summer):** Common persimmons grow over a wide range of conditions from dry, sterile, sandy woodlands to river bottoms to rocky hillsides. Growth is best on terraces of large streams and river bottoms with clays and heavy loams. It thrives in full sun but also is shade-tolerant and can persist in the understory.

**Apples:** Apple trees should be planted where they receive full sun (at least six or more hours) and where the soil is reasonably deep and fertile with good water drainage.

\* **Kale:** Keep your kale plants well watered. Along with cool temperatures, moist soil helps keep kale leaves sweet and crisp, rather than tough and bitter. Side dressing throughout the growing season with compost or feeding with fish emulsion will keep your kale growing.

## SPRING

**Asparagus:** In the third year, begin harvesting spears that are finger-sized and about 8" long. You can either snap off the spears or cut them with a knife. Harvest for about 4 weeks the first year. In subsequent years you can harvest until the weather warms and the spears look spindly. Then allow the foliage to grow and feed the plants.

\***Garlic:** Garlic is one of the easiest plants to grow. You plant the individual cloves within the bulb. Plant the largest cloves you have, to get the largest bulbs. Plant each garlic clove two to three inches below the soil surface and about 6 inches apart. A common novice dilemma is not knowing which end is up (it's the pointed end). Your garlic will still grow, planted pointed upside down, but the shoot will have to curve around and you will wind up with a malformed bulb.

**Wild ginger (also summer):** In the garden, wild ginger is terrific for poor soils in very shady areas, but it's also helpful in lighter shade and even part sun in a wide range of soils and moisture. You can use it under maple trees and evergreens or to soften building lines.

**Wild leeks:** Leeks are particular in their choice of habitat, flourishing mostly on steep, rocky slopes, with soil that is moist but well-drained and leaf only in the early spring. They often grow in huge patches near seeps and streams, but these areas of ideal habitat are delicate and infrequent and should be treated gently.

**Parsnips:** Parsnips grow best in full sun to partial shade, they prefer deep, well drained soil. They like rich, slightly heavy soil, well dug but *not* recently manured.

**Fiddleheads:** Must be harvested while still coiled and within one to two inches of the ground. Capable of growing between two to six inches in 24 hours.

## WINTER

**Artichokes (also spring):** For artichokes, good drainage during their growing period is very important. Artichokes will grow best in your garden with a sunny spot and deeply tilled, rich, well-drained soils. If they experience poor drainage, your crop may develop crown rot. When gardening, try to handle the plants as little as possible. If you do find any infected or diseased plants, remove them from your garden immediately (do not compost them).

**Root beer:** Water the plant and keep it moist. It likes damp soil, and will wilt if left in the sun or allowed to dry out. This is a host plant to a swallowtail butterfly caterpillar.

**Maple syrup:** Choose a planting site in either full sun or partial shade. Soil should be moist, well-drained and slightly acidic. The sugar maple does not tolerate salts, so planting close to a street where it could come in contact with winter road salt is not advised. Optimum conditions result in faster growth. Tap the tree in winter for its sap to make maple syrup.

**Potatoes (also summer):** The soil should be evenly moist, but not wet or soggy. If the soil is water logged when you dig, not only will you risk "caking" the soil, your seed potatoes will probably rot before they even get started. Potatoes can tolerate some frost, but you should use a loose covering of straw, or a temporary plastic plant as protection for the plants when they are young.

**Winter squash:** Winter squash can be harvested whenever the fruits have turned a deep, solid color and the rind is hard. Harvest the main part of the crop in September or October, before heavy frosts hit your area. Bees are necessary for pollinating squash and pumpkins.

**Onions:** The cultural requirements of onions are frequent shallow stirring of the soil and proper weeding. The feeding roots of the onion run close to the surface of the soil and should not be disturbed by deep cultivation. Sometimes a heavy rain after seeding will pack the surface so that the seeds can't break through. Under these circumstances it may be necessary to slightly break up the soil with a steel rake or a rake-like attachment on a cultivator.

## SUMMER

**Cherries:** Plant trees or bushes in a sunny site with good air circulation and average to rich, well-drained soil. Avoid low areas where frost and standing water can be a problem (especially for sweet types) or sites where cherries, peaches or plums have grown previously.

**Corn:** Sweet corn is a warm-season vegetable that can be grown easily in any garden with sufficient light, fertility, and space. Successive plantings can yield continual harvests from early summer until frost if the weather cooperates.

**Eggplants:** Eggplants like it hot, so don't transplant them into the garden until after all threat of frost has passed and the soil has thoroughly warmed. A layer of plastic mulch will help provide additional warmth and conserve moisture for your fast growing plants. Eggplants grow very well in raised beds and can be spaced twelve inches apart in each direction. Healthy plants will quickly cover and shade the bed, eliminating any opportunity for weeds to become established.

**Strawberries:** Strawberries need a site that has excellent drainage, gets full sun and warms up early in the spring so blossoms aren't destroyed by late frosts. A gentle, south-facing slope is ideal. If your soil drains poorly, grow strawberries in raised beds or containers.

\* **Tomatoes:** Tomatoes need plenty of warmth to taste their best, so provide shelter from chilly breezes, whether with a windbreak of trees, a garden wall, or a vine-covered trellis. Amend the soil with plenty of compost since tomatoes need soil rich in organic matter.

\***Arugula:** Arugula grows best in part shade and in soil enriched with organic compost. When harvesting the plant, cut it off at the soil line so it will grow back with more leaves.

\***Basil:** Basil is best grown in semi-shaded spot sheltered from wind. It improves the flavor of surrounding growing vegetables and repels insects.

\***Blueberries:** Blueberry bushes should be planted in a sunny area away from weeds. Mulching the plants helps conserve moisture and keep weeds away.