

Plant Hardiness

A quick guide to frost hardiness

Frost

sensitive(Harvest these plants when the temperature dips to 32°F or less)

Somewhat frost

hardy(These crops may survive temperatures as low as 28°F)

Very frost

hardy(Don't rush to harvest these; they'll be fine at 28° or colder)

Tomatoes Cucumbers

Lettuce Arugula

Leeks Scallions

Hot peppers

Chard

Chives

Sweet peppers

Escarole

Brussels sprouts

Eggplant

Endive

Broccoli

Beans

Cabbage

Kale

Basil

Nicotiana

Parsley

Nasturtiums

Beets

Melons

Carrots

Summer squash

Winter squash

Nasturtium

Pumpkins

Sunflower

Sage

Frost Tolerance of Vegetables

Light Frost - Temperatures 28-32 degrees F

Hard Frost - Temperatures below 28 degrees F.

Likely damaged by light frost: Beans, cucumbers, eggplants, muskmelon, New Zealand spinach, okra, peppers, pumpkins, summer squash, sweet corn, tomatoes, watermelon, amaranth, and winter squash (plants).

Can withstand light frost: Artichokes, beets, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chinese cabbage, endive, lettuce, parsnips, peas, swiss chard, escarole, arugula, bok choy, mache, and radicchio.

Can withstand hard frost: Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, collards, kale, kohlrabi, mustard, onions, parsley, peas, radishes, spinach, turnips, leeks, and sorrel.

It is important to understand that temperature is not the only factor affecting survivorship of plants during a frost event. The further a plant or its parts are from the ground, the more likely it is to be damaged by frost. The ground is usually still warm in early fall and will radiate some warmth to plants that are close to the ground. Humidity can also help protect plants from frost. Humid air holds more heat and reduces the drying effects of frost. Air movement also has an influence on frost damage. When wind blows during cold nights, it sweeps away any warm air trapped near structures or the ground, eliminating their

insulating capabilities.

Tender plants can be protected from a few light frosts with row covers or blankets. Mulched beets, carrots, leeks, onions, radishes, and parsnips can be harvested later in fall before the ground freezes. Light frost makes leafy greens and root vegetables sweeter, so it's worth leaving some of your kale and carrots in the ground until you're ready to use them. Regardless of the protection from frost, natural or man-made, any temperature below 25 degrees F is dangerous territory for vegetable plants.

Early fall is a great time to sow salad crops in a cold frame for harvest in late fall and early winter. Bok choy, lettuce, mesclun, kale, mustard, and spinach are a few good varieties to try.