

# CAN YOU DIG IT!



## Put Your Garden to Bed

Beginning of October is the time to prepare your garden for the cold and wet months ahead, and to give it a little extra love in preparation for the spring.

### Clean up!

Clean up the garden by removing diseased plants and dead foliage. Take out annual plants and leave the hardy perennials in. Some root crops, such as carrots, beets, and parsnips can be left in the ground in cold climates and dug up as needed. Also leave your hardy greens such

### Plant an annual cover crop

Provided they are dug in at the right time in the spring, annual cover crops—planted in the late summer and early fall—will grow, capture and recycle nutrients that would otherwise be lost by leaching during the winter and early spring, while protecting your soil from erosion.

West Coast Seeds ([www.westcoastseeds.com](http://www.westcoastseeds.com)) has good information on timing for different cover crops such as clover, field peas and fava beans.

### Plant garlic

September to November is the time to plant your garlic for next year. Get good quality garlic bulbs at your garden store or at a farmer's market.

You can mulch your garlic with manure (but don't touch the stem) when appear some green leaves. No need to water (how great is that!). Your garlic will be ready to harvest in July or August, then it will be a good time to plant some kale in your newly empty garden space!

If you plant a hardneck variety, make sure you harvest the garlic scapes in the spring. They are delicious!

### Mulch it

If you're not using cover crop, mulch your garden to protect it from the cold and erosion.

Apply a thick covering of organic matter over your garden: straw, compost or shredded leaves. If you use compost as mulch, make sure to also cover it with leaves or straw.

It is not recommended to use wood chips as mulch in a food-growing garden as it acidifies the soil.

### Bring your herbs inside

Rather than leaving your herbs under the harsh conditions of winter, bring them inside! Put your herbs in pots and place them in a sunny window. They will provide you with fresh herbs all winter long.

Choose only the healthiest plants to bring inside and prune some of the leaves and stem. Basil, rosemary, scented geraniums, lemon verbena, and sage can be enjoyed indoors in the winter and put back in the garden in the spring!