

CHILL OUT

Now is the time of year to relax with a stack of garden books, seed catalogs and other references and plan for next season. Before you start ordering seeds, however, you may want to consider some basic questions:

PERSEPHONE PERIOD

I'm happy to report that the Persephone period that I spoke about on December's radio show that started around Thanksgiving will be over on January 15th when daylight will start getting progressively longer. The plants start responding to more daylight and start to wake up.

THINK ABOUT YOUR GARDEN LAYOUT

- How many plants can fit into your bed?
- How much space do you really have in a sunny spot?
- Where are the semi-shady or shady spots in your garden? Go out and look mid-day. Of course the sun is further south right now and will move further north as we move forward to the gardening season. How do you know which way is north? Most smart phone have a built in compass or go buy an old-fashion compass.

ROW COVER

Invest in row cover for pest-prevention, cold nites and scorching sun later on. If I had to get one row cover, it would be a medium weight which is around .5 mil thick. Get enough to double it up in winter if you plan on starting your garden outside in early spring.

MAKE A MINI-HOOP HOUSE

And along those lines, what about making one of your raised beds into a low tunnel aka a mini hoop house so you can start some early crops come March. All you need is some 18' rebars to put in your bed and some $\frac{3}{4}$ pvc pipes curved over them spaced 2' apart. Then lay one 8' pvc pipe over the apex of the curved pvc pipes, across the length of your bed and tie it onto each curved pvc pipe. This will strengthen your new mini structure. For a 4' x 8' bed, I space the hoops every 2 feet starting at the ends. Then you could put the row cover directly on your plants and lay some 6 mil plastic over the hoops for added protection. Can you just lay row cover directly on your plants and not that additional plastic? Of course, you can! But if we get a big snow, your plants may get crushed. By building this

simple structure, you can give your plants extra protection year-round not just for spring. Cover the whole structure with plastic so it has the ends covered too. Tack down with boards or rocks to keep from blowing off but open the endcaps on warm spring or winter days. When the heat of summer comes along, you can pull off the plastic and put the row cover over the pvc pipes to keep the heat off new plants as well. So, it works early spring all the way through late fall.

GROW WHAT YOU LOVE

This year, decide what you really like to eat and grow it. Also grow what is precious and unavailable, or costly: things such as organic baby greens or shallots instead of onions or colorful heirloom tomatoes next year

STARTING PLANTS

Not much starting right now but by the middle of January, you can start SOME cool season crops like lettuce, spinach arugula seeds to put out later. You will need an inside light source. I use a 4' shop light hung over a shelf on chains that I can raise up as the little plants grow taller. I use a Baker's shelf. You can get a small half size or taller full size shelves. I use full spectrum lights and a timer. Light from your windowsill is not strong enough in January.

Here is my list of 2025 veggie SEEDS I want to grow

COOL SEASON CROPS

RADISHES

Watermelon radish whitish outside with bright pink inside-nice flavor

SPINACH

Carmel

SPRING LETTUCES

Oakleaf

4 Seasons

Winter Wonder

Marshall Red Romaine

Salanova varieties

Santoro

CHARD
Argentata
Ruby Red
Yellow

KALE
Kalettes-kale the size of baby kale leaves. A cross between
a kale and brussel sprout.

CARROTS
Atomic Red
Cosmic Purple
Scarlet Nantes

BEETS
Badger Flame
Chiogga

CAULIFLOWER
White and Purple variety

CABBAGE
Kalibos- purple cone shaped cabbage

WARM SEASON CROPS

SUMMER SQUASH
Fruilana-yellow zucchini type-less attractive to squash bugs

WINTER SQUASH
Waltham Butternut less attractive to squash bugs

DRY BEANS
I grow different rare beans for William Woys Weaver to help ensure
their viability. I send the seeds (minus what I want to keep) back to
his company. He has many rare vegetable seeds. I just grow beans
for him. He calls me the bean lady!

GREEN BEANS

Rattlesnake-Green with purple stripes-Heat resistant

PEPPERS-

Jimmy Nardello-sweet

Lava Red-sweet

Habanada-sweet (not Habanero)

Calabrian Caviar-sweet

Poblano-mild heat

Pasilla Bajo-like shishito but a little bigger-no heat

CUCUMBERS

EATING VARIETY

Poona Kheera

PICKLING VARIETIES

Parisian for cornichon pickles

Boothsby Blonde for bread and butter pickles

IF I HAD JUST 7 TOMATO PLANTS TO GROW

Virginia Sweet-large yellow

Paul Robeson-brick color with green shoulder

Purple Cherokee-purplish with green shoulder

Large Barred Boar-deep purplish with green stripes

Goliath-red

Sungold-yellow cherry

Black cherry-purple cherry