

Eat Your Year

Month-by-month actions for continuous edibles

Presenter: Bill Thorness

01: JANUARY

Plant: Little Gem romaine lettuce (indoors)

Harvest: Lacinato kale, Rainbow chard

02: FEBRUARY

Plant: Thomas Laxton shelling pea

Harvest: Boldor beets, Little Finger carrots

03: MARCH

Plant: Anna Cheeka’s Ozette potato

Harvest: Purple Sprouting broccoli

04: APRIL

Plant: Javelin parsnips

Harvest: Spring salad greens

05: MAY

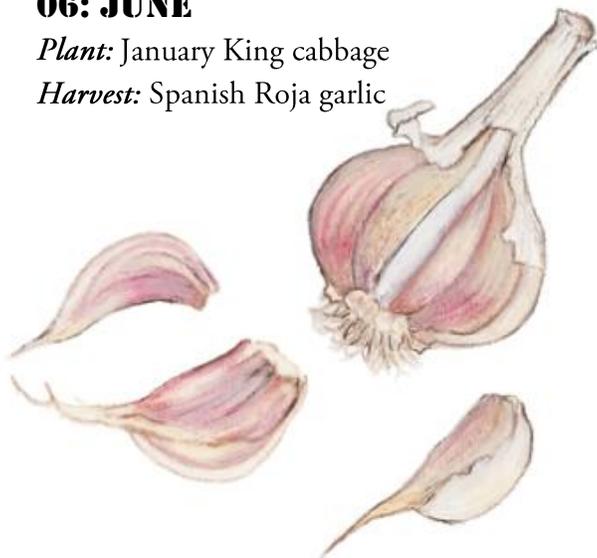
Plant: Tennisball Black-seeded lettuce

Harvest: Black Spanish radish pods

06: JUNE

Plant: January King cabbage

Harvest: Spanish Roja garlic



Late Winter into Spring,
A time for eating great gobs
Of the year's best parsley.
Good that I grow it,
For I could never afford
The addictive amounts
I must stuff into my face
After just a tiny, first bite.

—Marc Boucher-Colbert, rooftop garden expert, Portland

The early spring is magic in a Northwest garden, especially for the forager disguised as a gardener, for this is when the weeds are often more robust than the plantings—and thankfully many of those weeds, such as dandelions, bittercress, chickweed, and so on, are equally tasty and nutritious. A gardener who learns to eat the weeds is the greenest of thumbs.

—Langdon Cook, Seattle author of *The Mushroom Hunters* and *Fat of the Land*

I’m always looking for edible/ornamental combinations. My favorite last year was orange and flame pink ‘Princess Irene’ tulips underplanted with ruffled cut-and-come-again lettuces, ‘Baby Mesclun’ and ‘Farmer’s Market Blend’ from Renee’s Garden Seeds. I filled a round feed trough with the tulips, planting them further apart than I would usually, and sowed a succession of lettuce seeds around them as soon as the tulips broke ground in March. The tall, fragrant tulips bloomed mid-April, and several crops of lettuces grew up around them to be harvested all spring.

—Valerie Easton, former “Natural Gardener” columnist, *Pacific Northwest* magazine, *The Seattle Times*

Kale is my constant companion in the garden and on my table! A single sowing yields a generous harvest throughout the entire calendar year.

—Lorene Edwards-Forkner, Seattle author of *Vegetable Gardening for the Pacific Northwest*

You want pollinators and beneficial creatures in your garden? Grow runner beans. I'm convinced that a year cannot go by without growing a few runner beans up a slim teepee or very tall trellis. Even if you never get around to eating them, plant them just the same. Train the tender, twining snakes up strings and poles. Turns out the flowers are favored by hummingbirds, who will perform great feats of aerial acrobatics with aggressive maneuvers to protect their territory. This is first-rate garden theatre.

—Lisa Taylor, Seattle author of *Your Farm in the City*

A ripe tomato picked from the garden has a taste and aroma like nothing bought from a store. I feel sad for those who have not had this culinary experience!

—Mike Darcy, longtime host of "In the Garden with Mike Darcy," KXL-FM, Portland

I am compelled to clip sprigs of fruit or vegetables to tuck into my floral arrangements. To me, the presence of edibles in a bouquet or centerpiece is essential: a beautiful and bountiful way to signify the season! When you add edibles like berries or cherry tomatoes, cut them when they are unripe—they will actually last as long as your flowers and foliage. And always use organically grown edibles. Dinner party guests have been known to pluck a grape from my arrangement and pop it into their mouths.

—Debra Prinzing, Seattle author, podcaster and creator of Slowflowers.com

Arugula is a perfect year-round vegetable for our climate. It is hardy, happily self-sows and can be used in numerous ways. The new variety 'Wasabi' will bowl you over. 'Wasabi' arugula pesto is a delicious treat!

—Alice Doyle, Log House Plants, Cottage Grove, Ore.

Parsnips are meant for waiting for. They are assuredly ready to eat in late August, September and October. But, if you are a Lutheran in good standing, you do not even consider digging a single one until Thanksgiving at the earliest. Then you must ration them out through the entirety of Lent. Caramelized slowly atop our AGA, they are comfort incarnate. A beef stew, a mash with curry, a roasted medley with beets, carrots and onions. Parsnips fill our house during the dark days with more warmth than a roaring fire and three fingers of single malt scotch.

—Daniel J. Hinkley, plantsman, Kingston, Wash.

07: JULY

Plant: Roodnerf Brussels sprout starts

Harvest: Dragon's Tongue bush beans

08: AUGUST

Plant: Black Spanish radish

Harvest: Jimmy Nardello Italian Sweet pepper



09: SEPTEMBER

Plant: Broccoli raab

Harvest: Jaune Flamme tomato

10: OCTOBER

Plant: d'Etampes corn salad,
Osaka Purple mustard

Harvest: Red Kuri squash

11: NOVEMBER

Plant: Broad Windsor fava beans

Harvest: Champion collard greens

12: DECEMBER

Plant: warm thoughts of spring

Harvest: Russian Red kale, Javelin parsnips

About the speaker: Bill Thorness is the author of *Cool Season Gardener* and *Edible Heirlooms*. He has been growing edibles in the Maritime Northwest since the 1980s.

