



138 Latigo Lane  
Naples, Idaho 83847-9730  
Phone: 208-267-5108

## Vegetable Gardening in North Idaho

If you've never gardened before, it's okay to start with three tomato plants, a 6-foot row of carrots and maybe a zucchini. Insuring your personal success is more important the first year than growing a lot to eat. If you find that you like gardening and were successful at it, then put in more next year. Supplement your home-grown produce with trips to the local farmers' market. Knowing and growing are unquestionably linked when it comes to producing food. An educated gardener is a successful gardener.

### Cool Season Crops

This means that crops such as kale, lettuce, beets, kohlrabi, cabbage and Swiss chard can still be transplanted to give you a bonus harvest of nutritious vegetables. Buy transplants now and put them in your garden for a bountiful harvest later. Many of these plants will survive frost, and as many of you know, we can get a light frost late in the spring, but then enjoy our summer. Vegetables that survive a light frost include beets, broccoli, green onion, kohlrabi, leaf lettuce, mustard greens, cauliflower, cilantro, peas, radishes, spinach, Swiss chard and turnips. Vegetables that survive a hard frost into the mid 20 F range include Brussels sprouts, cabbage, collard greens and kale.

### Warm Season Crops

In north Idaho, our gardening season can be challenging. Our springs consist of nice days that convince you spring has sprung followed by prolonged cool, wet weather. Typically a cold front will pay you a visit, clearing out the atmosphere and providing the fresh air we all know and love. However, the cool nights that follow can produce frost that can damage or kill tender plants. Further., many of the plants we love need to get everything they can out of our growing season, and if they do, they reward us with a bumper crop of food and flora.

### Season Extension Tools

[Type text]

Location is important to extend the season. Choose a site that has a southern or western exposure that is at the top of a hill or bench so that cold air will travel to adjacent low spots.

Cover plants with a protective cover such as floating row cover, a breathable polypropylene fabric that protects to about 28F. It can be used to cover plants indefinitely since it is light and allows water and air to pass through. Plastic will also work but it is a poor insulator and will cook your plants during the day.

Tunnel gardening involves a support system from 2-8 feet in height covered with plastic or row cover. This system creates an environment that is significantly warmer during the day and slightly warmer at night. Coldframes are small boxes that provide plant protection. They can be as simple as bales of straw with an old window to cover to one of the fancy ones found in garden catalogs. You can also build your own using one of the many plans found on the internet.

Save water—and the weeds it awakens—by using drip irrigation, soaker hoses and mulches. Make your own tomato cages, bean supports and other garden structures: creativity pays. Be vigilant for pest damage: nip it early while you can still treat pests cheaply or—better still—dispatch them for free underfoot.

*Mike Bauer is the Horticulturist for Moose Valley Farms, a full-service garden center located in Naples at mile marker 495. Please feel free to call us at 267-5108 or stop in if you have any questions. For more information on vegetable gardening, attend Moose Valley's Find out Fridays series on Friday, May 8. Information: 267-5108.*

[Type text]