

# HIGH SUMMER

One week after a perfect day of soaking rain and it's almost as though it never happened! The hot temperatures have returned and the squash plants are wilting in the midday sun again—along with us.

Winter squash should now be visible on the vines. Check these new squash every few days, gently lifting them to check for rot and squash bugs, but be careful not to sever them from the vines. If you already have several squash developing, you can begin picking off a few new blossoms to encourage the vine to put more energy into making these squash large and tasty. Keep clearing away dead and fallen leaves to keep the area around the developing squash free from disease. Water the main center of the plant rather than the trailing vines.

In late August, most of the cold crops have finally reached the end of production. Kale and collard plants now look more like mop heads than leafy greens, the last few florets of broccoli are tiny and sparse. Once you have harvested the last good leaves or florets, pull up the plants, shake the roots well to put compost back in the raised bed. As long as the discarded plants were healthy, you can break them up and put them in your compost pile. Any with slimy, broken roots or insect infestations should be trashed.

Even this late in the season you can sow a little spinach and radish in the spaces. Water these squares well every day to give them a good start.

Keep harvesting herbs like thyme, sage and oregano, cutting off the flowering heads. If the cilantro has already flowered and set seed, wait until the seeds (often called coriander) turn brown, then crush them finely with a rolling pin and use them to flavor sauces for chicken or white fish.

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**The Complete Compost Gardening Guide** | Deborah L. Martin and Barbara Pleasant

## MORE ON WINTER SQUASH

[High Mowing Organic Seeds: Winter Squash](#)

[Territorial Seed Company: Winter Squash](#)