

Growing Greens year'round: a few notes
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Thanks largely to Eliot Coleman's leadership and ingenuity; many in Maine have greatly expanded our growing season.

Disclaimer: These are just notes based on the experience of one household. The powerpoint features photographs from the greenhouse David Foley and Judy Berk of Northport, and also from David Lewis of Belmont and Jean Hardy of Belfast.

Growing Greens year'round is not for everyone; for example,

- If you like a break from gardening in the winter, it may not be for you.
- Not all varieties thrive all winter long
- Moles or mice may discover and feast on your greens in winter

Some of the benefits of growing your own greens year'round include:

- The taste, nutrition and health of fresh greens year-round
- No insect damage during the winter – it is the very best time to grow those flea-beetle susceptible crops!
- Many greens get sweeter due to colder temperatures
- No need to weed or water during winter months
- A sense of pride (and, a bit of smugness) when you bring a fresh salad to a January potluck.
- Not contributing to global warming by shipping trucks of old, water-filled vegetables from California and Mexico to Maine
- You can use the same tempered space to start seedlings in the spring, giving heat-loving plants a boost (i.e. eggplant) and extending the fall season for other crops too.

Protection options we have tried so far:

- Cold frames- including hay bales arranged in a rectangle with old storm windows laying across the top
- Row cover and hoops in the garden
- Window shelves/sills
- Cloches made from old gallon milk jugs and 5 gallon water jugs
- Home made greenhouse plus row cover inside– 2 versions, using galvanized conduit
- Store bought hoophouse plus row cover inside

Other ways we enjoy greens year-round (particularly helpful in February, when the pickin's are slimmest)

Belgian endive

Root cellared cabbage

We usually plant a selection of these varieties in mid-September, and clean out sections to replant in March for spring greens. (All direct seeded, unless otherwise noted)

Grow and eat year virtually year round

Spinach – Winter Giant, Space

Tatsoi - Evenstar Landrace tatsoi best – other tatsois OK too

Kale - Red Russian, Winterbor, Beedy's (We start from seed and transplant from the garden in the fall)

Collards

Cima di Rapa

Maruba santoh

Mustard greens (various)

Mache

Minutina

Cilantro

Season extension through Thanksgiving/New Years

Lettuces

Radicchio (sugarloaf/pan du zucharo)

Lacinata (Dinosaur/Nero di Cavolo) Kale

Good to New Years, then dies back. Springs back in March.

Parsley (we transplant from the garden in the fall)

Chard (we transplant from the garden in the fall)

Cima di Rapa

Plant/Replant in March

Lettuce

Radishes

Spinach

Arugula

Trieste Chicory

Any of the above

We've tried to winter over and have not worked well for us

Pac choi

Chinese cabbage

Resources

- Eliot Coleman books: Four Season Harvest, Winter Harvest Manual...
- Seed companies including FEDCO, Johnny's, Seeds from Italy
- Hoophouses - Growers Supply, Farmtek, (this is the greenhouse we now have: http://www.farmtek.com/farm/supplies/prod1;;c81235b9_104878.html)
- This fellow was recommended by one of the attendees at a Belfast Garden Club talk: <http://ledgewoodfarm.com/>, ed@ledgewoodfarm.com (builds hoophouses

for Johnny's, Dilly Dally Farm, and others, including a 17'x 20' on spruce head island)

- At a Belfast presentation, I was given a business card by Ike Johnson, 273-3760, email liznike@tels.net. He said he can help with greenhouse construction and assembly.

Think Green!