

Finish Strong ~ Start Fresh



*A Gardener's Guide to Closing Summer
and Planting the Promise of Fall*

Mary Roberts

The Second Season Farmer

Windcrest Farm

FINISH STRONG, START FRESH

SPRING STARTS IN THE FALL

**END OF SUMMER
GARDENER SURVIVAL**

**PREPARING THE GARDEN
FOR WHAT COMES NEXT**

RENEW •

REFRESH •

RELAX •

In August/September we could be tending two gardens at once

THE GARDEN THAT IS RIPENING

- Harvest frequently
- Sort, share, and preserve
- Support what is productive
- Release what has finished
- Record what the season taught

THE GARDEN THAT IS BEGINNING

- Prepare open beds
- Sow and transplant on time
- Protect seedlings from heat
- Keep shallow roots moist
- Plan only what you can maintain

The transition is an overlap, not a switch.



RENEW • REFRESH • RELAX •



RENEW

Renew production by choosing what stays, what goes, and what can be carried forward.

1

REFRESH

Refresh beds, irrigation, protection, and planting for the cooler months ahead.

2

RELAX

Relax the workload by matching the garden plan to your time, energy, and real needs.

3

Do not carry every summer crop, unfinished project, or expectation into the second season.

KEEP

Still productive?
Healthy enough?
Worth water and
labor?

REMOVE

Finished?
Heavily diseased?
Blocking fall space?

CARRY FORWARD

Cuttings? Seed?
Harvest? Notes?
A lesson for next year?



RENEW

Keep what is earning its place

Evaluate the whole return, not just whether a plant is alive.

PRODUCTION

Is it giving a useful harvest?

HEALTH

Can problems be managed without spreading?

SPACE

Is the bed needed for a time-sensitive fall crop?

LABOR + WATER

Does the remaining harvest justify the care?

VALUE

Flavor, pollinators, shade, seed, beauty, or learning?



RENEW

Harvest is a process, not a single action



RENEW

Preserve in amounts your life can hold

Small batches can make a difference.

15 MINUTES

- Chop and freeze peppers
- Freeze whole tomatoes
- Bundle herbs to dry

30 MINUTES

- Roast tomatoes for sauce
- Make refrigerator pickles
- Freeze pesto

SAVE FOR LATER

- Dehydrate sliced produce
- Jam or fruit sauce
- Dry flowers and petals

Label every container with contents + date.



RENEW

Propagate what deserves another season

Carry forward the best plants without carrying the whole plant.

Propagate selectively: vigor, flavor, resilience, or meaning should earn the space.

TAKE CUTTINGS

Tender herbs and selected
ornamentals
Choose clean, vigorous growth
Root before cold weather
Label variety and date

DIVIDE OR MOVE

Mark perennials now
Wait for suitable weather
Prepare the destination first
Water after moving

SAVE SEED

Select healthy, true-to-type
plants
Allow seed to mature
Dry thoroughly
Label crop, variety, and year



REFRESH

Refresh the bed without erasing its history

Summer roots leave useful channels for air, water, and soil life.

REMOVE

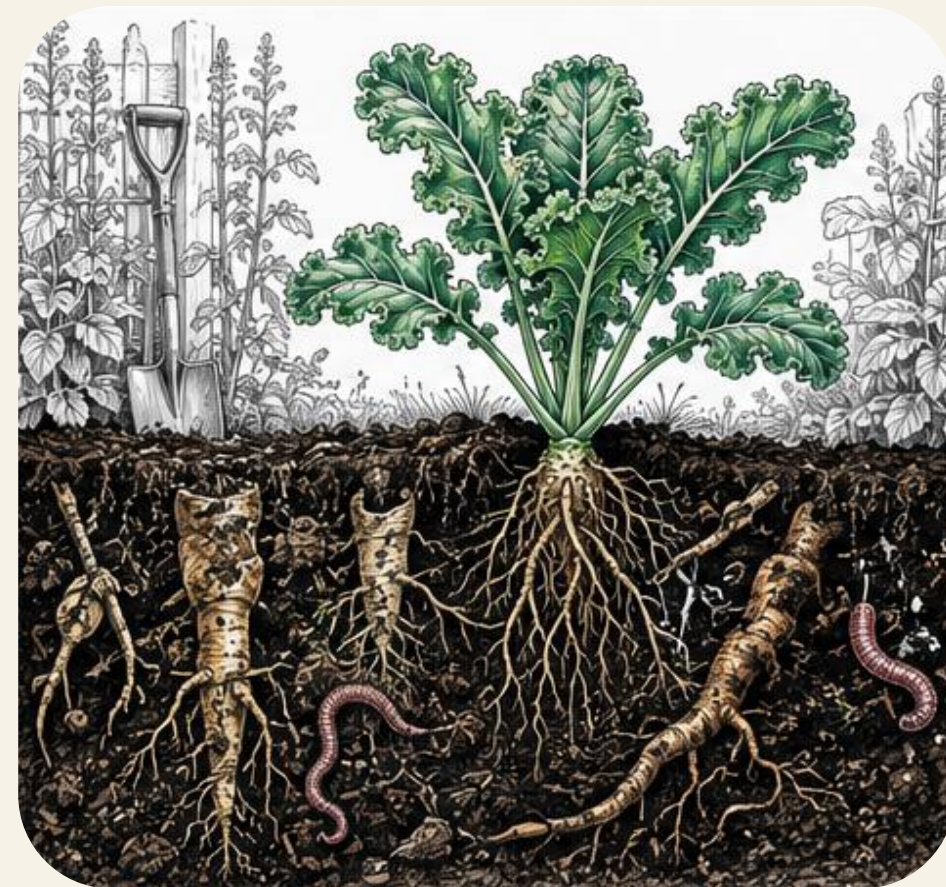
finished tops +
interfering debris

KEEP

healthy roots + soil
structure

ADD ONLY AS NEEDED

compost, mulch,
targeted amendment



Avoid unnecessary deep tilling and never work wet soil.

REFRESH

Inspect before you amend

The bed may need planting, mulch, repair, or rest more than fertilizer.

? **Compacted?**

? **Dry below the surface?**

? **Mulch broken down?**

? **Soil life visible?**

? **Deficiency symptoms?**

? **Drainage working?**

? **Soil test needed?**

? **Bed ready or resting?**



More fertilizer is not automatically more fertility.

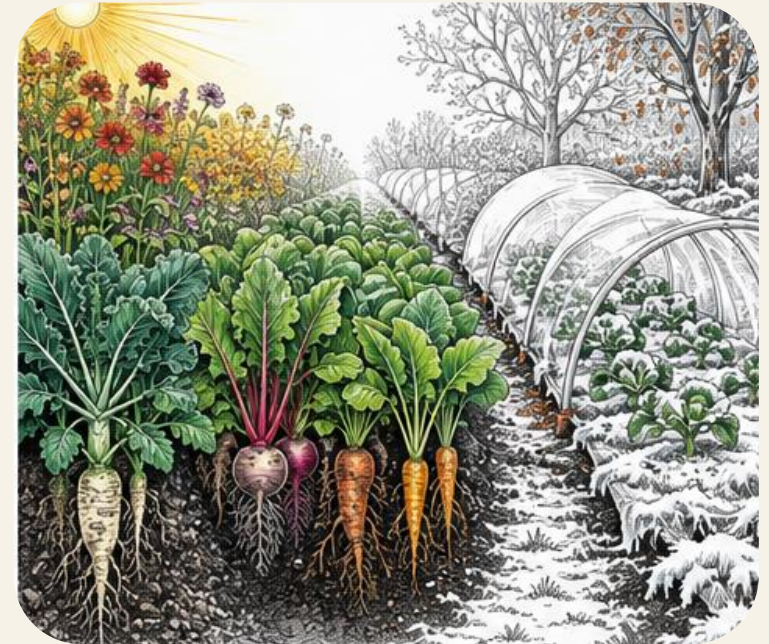
REFRESH

Plant backward from the first hard freeze

Days to maturity are a starting point, not a guarantee.

BUILD IN A FALL SLOWDOWN BUFFER

Shortening days and cooler temperatures can lengthen real maturity beyond the packet estimate.



LONGER CROPS

GREENS + ROOTS

FAST CROPS

FREEZE



early



succession



later



buffer

REFRESH

Match the planting method to the crop

August / September may include both transplants and direct sowing.

TRANSPLANT

Broccoli
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Brussels sprouts
Collards
Kale
Swiss chard

DIRECT SOW

Beets • carrots • turnips • rutabagas
Asian greens • mustard • arugula
Bush beans • cucumbers • squash
Lettuce • radishes • cilantro • dill



Variety, weather, bed space, and days to maturity determine the final choice.

REFRESH

Fall seedlings still face summer conditions

Protection comes before performance.

MOISTURE

Keep the upper layer consistently moist

SHADE

Morning sun; afternoon relief when practical

COVER

Insect netting or row cover

AIR

Air movement around trays

RAIN

Protection from pounding storms

WATCH

Frequent observation



REFRESH

Water with purpose

Mature summer plants and new fall seedlings need different watering patterns.

MATURE SUMMER CROPS

- Deep watering
- Broad root zone
- Longer interval
- Support fruit load
- Watch for disease and saturation

SEEDBEDS + TRANSPLANTS

- Moist surface layer
- Frequent checks
- Gentle application
- Extra attention in trays
- Shift deeper as roots establish



Goal: evenly moist, well-aerated soil, not constantly wet soil.

REFRESH

Refresh the protection system

A cover is only useful when we keep looking underneath it.

Cabbageworms
chewed leaves, frass

Aphids
clusters, curled growth

Harlequin bugs
stippling, wilting

Loopers
irregular holes

Flea beetles
shot-hole damage

Beetles + disease
beans and cucurbits



Scout early. Identify first. Choose the least disruptive effective response.

RELAX

Relax means working with your real capacity

Gardener care is part of garden care.



COOLER HOURS

Move heavy outdoor work away from peak heat.

WATER + SHADE

Carry drinking water and create recovery pauses.

MOVE WORK INDOORS

Sort, label, and process in a cooler place.

SHORT ROUNDS

Stop before fatigue changes judgment or form.

USE MECHANICAL HELP

Carts, smaller loads, and good lifting protect tomorrow.

CHOOSE LESS

Fewer well-tended plantings outperform abandoned abundance.

RELAX

A four-week transition rhythm

Sequence the work so everything is not urgent at once.

1

CLEAR + SORT

Harvest • remove
• weed • prepare

2

RESET + BEGIN

Sow • transplant
• shade • label

3

SUPPORT

Thin • water •
scout • repair

4

GATHER + EVALUATE

Preserve • save
seed • record •
adjust



At month's end: decide what continues and schedule the next succession.

CLOSING

Finish strong. Start fresh.

Your second season begins when you prepare for it.

RENEW

What will I keep, remove, or propagate this week?

REFRESH

Which bed or system needs attention first?

RELAX

What can I simplify so the plan remains sustainable?

**Gather what is ready.
Record what you learned.
Protect what is beginning.**



**The spring garden begins with
optimism, while the second
season begins with experience**

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info@WindcrestOrganics.com



704.764.7746 (office)



[WindcrestNC](#)



[WindcrestFarmOrganics](#)

