

Moonlight and Radishes, Carrots and Spinach
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As we begin to wind down the summer growing season, it is time to begin thinking about cool season crops and where the next phase of gardening will take us. Of course considering the condition of our soil, the temperature, available nutrients and the amount of light all play a dynamic part in the art of planting a successful garden. There is however, a recent trend being used by many organic gardeners that is an ancient trend; timing plantings to the phases of the moon.

Whether mentioned in the ancient writings of the Greeks or in stories passed down by family farmers for generations (something I learned from my grandfather), the gravitational pull of moon is believed to affect planting just as it affects the tides. According to traditions, the waxing (increasing light) and the waning (decreasing light) of the moon are directly correlated to the amount of moisture in the soil, making planting for both above ground and root crops a timely matter.

It's August. The time to plant arugula, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cilantro, collard greens, kale, lettuce, mustard greens, radishes, spinach, Swiss chard and turnips is now. Above ground crops such as broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower should be planted during the waxing moon which is between the new moon and the full moon when there is more moisture in the soil. The new moon is July 30th and the full moon is August 13th.

Root crops: carrots, radishes and turnips etc., need to be planted after the full moon. When the moon begins to wane, the energy is being drawn back down into the soil. The week directly after the full moon is best for these plantings, August 14th – 20th.

If you are asking yourself what to do with the rest of the month, that's a silly question now isn't it? Pulling weeds tops the list (might take days). Add harvesting summer crops, composting, fertilizing and controlling pests (more slugs than you can shake a salt shaker at?). Gardening by the light of the moon is complex and perhaps unfamiliar, but a trend not taken lightly by ancient and modern gardeners.