

## Permaculture in Practice

# Warm your table with year-round garden

The next big terrorist attack could come from the poisoning of our food supply, according to outgoing Health and Human Services secretary Tommy Thompson. To most folks our food supply must seem as protected as the Twin Towers seemed to all of us back on Sept. 10, 2001. Yet the fact remains that our food supply is threatened on many fronts, simply because a couple of generations ago we lost our ability to grow our basic needs locally.

That's where this column comes in. Last month we looked at how to build a simple cold frame for growing your own food in a very small space during the cool and cold seasons. Now let's explore how this really works. (Like last month, I'll urge you to read Eliot Coleman's *Four-Season Harvest* or check out his Web site, [www.fourseasonfarm.com](http://www.fourseasonfarm.com), for a bigger and better version of what you'll find below).

**January:** Finish building your cold frames. Complete the planning process for your cold frames and how they will relate

to the rest of your garden and landscape. Acquire materials such as seeds, organic potting soil, ice cream sticks for marking your crop rows, and a fine-spraying water nozzle.

**February:** Sow hardy winter greens (arugula, endive, dandelion, kale, lettuce, spinach, sorrel, Swiss chard) and cold crops (beet, carrot, leek, green onion, parsley, radish).

**March:** Sow less-hardy veggies (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, melons, squash) and many herbs. Begin to harvest earliest crops from sowing in February.

**April:** Transplant many of your hardy winter greens and cold crops to the garden. Sow the least-hardy annuals (chiles, bell peppers, tomatoes) and remaining herbs in the places that are now available in the cold frame. Continue harvesting from frames. Begin harvesting from the garden.

**May:** Transplant your remaining veggies and herbs to the garden. In Santa Fe, May 15 is usually regarded as our

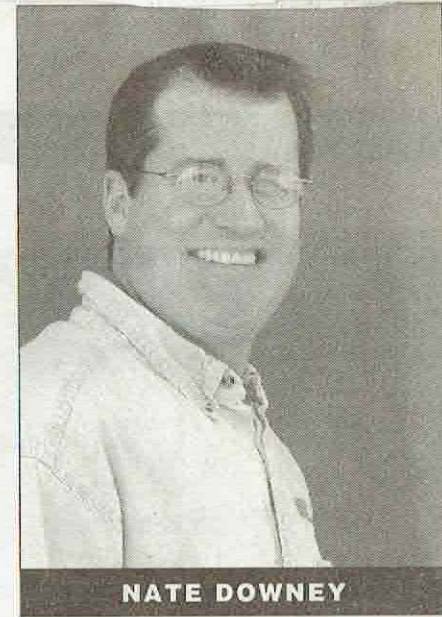
last potential frost date, but keep tabs on weather forecasts. You will often be able to either protect your plants with your cold frames during a surprise frost or get your transplants out sooner to give them an even quicker jump on the season. Continue harvesting from frames and garden.

**June and July:** Your cold frames will be less relevant in hotter months (especially when the sun is also highest in the sky) but consider starting cold crops early by using shade cloth, instead of glass, over your frames. Continue harvesting from garden.

**August and September:** Sow certain hardy winter greens and cold crops in cold frames. Continue harvesting from garden.

**October and November:** Begin harvesting from cold frames. Sow remaining hardy winter greens and cold crops in cold frames. Complete harvesting from garden. Store squash, tubers, tomatoes, apples, etc. appropriately.

**December:** Continue harvesting from cold frames.



**NATE DOWNEY**

All year, keep building your compost pile, and use this bounty in your frames and garden. And don't forget to vent and water the plants in your cold frames. It gets amazingly hot and sometimes dry in these cold-defying microclimates.

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