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Summertime in Tennessee brings forth the favorite fruits of the earth. Tomatoes and swee corn quickly follow on the heels of beans, squash and cucumbers, and the melons are swelling. So what am I doing out in the garden with lettuce and cabbage seed?

We are planting the fall garden, now, during the middle of the summer harvesting. the tiny seedlings will be ready to transplant in mid-August, to make their heads in September, October and November. To harvest then, we plant now.

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If you want beets to pickle, talk to me. As a row gets pulled up we can resow it into something else. A row of leeks is now a row of lettuce, and so is a row of beans. I love to get rid of old vegetables to make room for new ones.

The cold frames are used for growing tomato seedlings to set out in the garden. They were full of extra plants, which were already starting to make fruit. But I didn't make the mistake I made a few years ago.

"I'll just let those 'maters go," I said to myself. The cold frames filled up with delicious cherry tomatoes. We ate from them all summer long.

The next year I filled it up with tomato seeds again, my usual 10 or 12 varieties. I like Whoppers, Big Boys and many other big red tomatoes. We don't grow cherry tomatoes for our customers because it takes too long to fill up a basket.

You've probably guessed by now what happened. The cherry tomatoes from the previous year sprouted in the cold frame along with my seeds, and I couldn't tell them apart. I didn't realize the extent of my mistake until the tomato patch started ripening and what I thought were going to be big reds turned out to be those volunteer cherry tomatoes.

So we clean out the cold frames before the tomatoes start producing. We mixed up some creek sand, conviently left from the flood, with compost and rock phosphate. Into this mixture, which was raked into the cold frame soil, I sowed the fall brassicas (a fancy name for cabbage).

Chinese cabbage, Bok choy, Kohlrabi and broccoli are all poking their cute little heads up out of the ground. The broccoli is Purple Sprouting, and is supposed to over-winter and give us broccoli next spring. All of these plants will be set out in the gar den next month.

Until then we'll keep harvesting he fruits. Cucumbers and dill, tomatoes and basil, beans and zucchini, and corn, corn and more corn. When any of these crops starts to peter out we don't care. We have other, younger plantings awaiting their turn.

I simply mow them down, till them in, and get the ground ready for the fall garden. It's like New Year's in summer as we ring out the old and bring in the new.