

In The Dirt: November NC

November in the NC Piedmont/Foothills is past the point of general direct-seeding — frost has usually hit by now, and the garden shifts into protection and dormant-planting mode rather than active seeding.

Still worth direct-seeding (narrow window, cold-hardy only):

- Spinach — can still germinate in cold soil and will overwinter, resuming growth in spring. Best bet if you want to seed anything this month.
- Garlic and shallots — if you didn't get to it in October, early November is still fine, ideally by mid-month before the ground gets too cold to work.

Cover crops — last call:

- Winter rye is the most forgiving option this late; it germinates in cooler soil than clover or vetch. Good choice if you have bare beds you want protected through winter.

Not worth seeding this month:

- Lettuce, radishes, greens, root crops — daylight and soil warmth are too low for reliable germination or growth now. Anything started this late likely won't mature before hard freezes set in.

What November is really for:

- Mulching beds for winter protection
- Planting bare-root fruit trees, berry bushes, and perennials (this is actually a great month for that — dormant season is ideal for transplanting woody plants)
- Cleaning up spent crops and adding compost
- Protecting any remaining fall greens (spinach, kale, collards from earlier plantings) with row cover as hard frosts arrive

Practical note: this is a natural pivot point for programming — instead of a "what to plant" session, November suits a "putting the garden to bed" or "planning next year's beds".