Garden Winterization

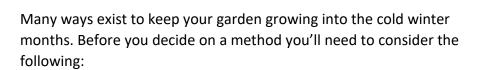Many ways exist to keep your garden growing into the cold winter months. Before you decide on a method you'll need to consider the following:

1. Is your goal to extend the harvest of warm weather crops (tomatoes, squash, peppers, etc.) or have cold weather crops (kale, lettuce, spinach, broccoli, etc.) grow through winter?
2. What is your budget? The Internet has some wonderfully durable systems, but they tend to be pricy.
3. Materials used will be determined by your goals and budget. These are the core elements needed:
   a. Cover to keep temperatures elevated allowing plants to stay alive and protected from frost and snow
   b. Structure to support cover
   c. Anchors to hold down cover

Keep the following in mind:

1. Plants will not grow as quickly in the winter
2. Warm weather crops need cover before the first frost.
3. Cold weather crops need cover before first killing frost (32 degrees).
   a. If planting cold weather crops, research the lowest germination temperature to help determine what to plant. (This temperature refers to soil temperature, not air temperature.)
4. Season extenders may keep pests alive through winter. Cold winters are the best treatment for most bug and fungus issues.

Additional Resources:

www.motherofahubbard.com (low tunnel instructions, crop selection, recipes)

http://www.greencastonline.com/tools/soiltempmaps.aspx (average soil temperature report)

500 Gardens Low Tunnel:

½" (Internal Diameter) Charlotte Pipe PVC	4 pieces at $1.59	$6.36
½" Two hole straps	Pack of 10 at $1.87	$1.87
1"x 2" x 8' Wood	4 pieces at $1.98	$7.92
10' Polyethethylene Plastic 6 mil thickness	25' roll at $24.98	$1.20
1"- 1 ½" Screws	1 lb. bag at $9.37	$1.00

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$18.35 per bed

*Cost based on recent Home Depot prices and estimated for one bed, some materials may not be sold in small quantities.

* 12 ft. cover needed for 8 ft. bed, allowing 4 ft. to cover top of tunnel and down to ground on each end.

* 1 inch by 2 inch wood strips are screwed together with plastic in between to keep the sides down. A more cost effective method such as bricks, clips or stones can be used.