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## *November & December*

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The fall rains came and put an end to our merry-making, but if you planted hardy plants like kale, Brussels sprouts and cabbage, chances are they're hanging in there. I eat kale right through to Christmas; if you've covered or banked a few plants with small bales of straw, it'll go on even longer (Curly kale is reported to have overwintered in NS).

In early November, I ask my rural friends for updates on the carrot harvest: around this time of year, giant fields of them are plucked from the soil by tractors and plunked into transport trucks destined for the Oxford cannery, but mechanical harvesting means many carrots are left behind. If you're not particular about organic, and get permission from the farmer, you can spend a fine afternoon a-gleaning in the fields and will retrieve more slightly damaged carrots than you can use. I juice some and make a lot of carrot cake for friends with birthdays in November! (For an excellent paean to the art of gleaning, I highly recommend the French documentary *The Gleaners*; the section on potatoes is especially inspiring).

I thank my lucky stars for the farmers' market at this time of year as the gleanings from my own garden are almost all consumed, but for the pickles on the shelf. If you haven't done so yet, write a Christmas thank you letter to your favourite farmer this year and pass it to them with a smile as



they hand you your produce. We are so lucky that they keep doing what they do!