



Making The Most Of Every Season

The Summer Collections 2024: Pocket Companion & Growing Guide



Ready, Steady, Grow

Gardening in the summer, especially growing plants from seed, is both rewarding and enriching. The warm temperatures and extended daylight hours provide the ideal conditions for seeds to germinate and thrive. Summer gardening from seed gives us the opportunity to cultivate a wide variety of plants, from vibrant flowers to nutritious vegetables.

Summer's warmth accelerates the germination process, and seedlings often emerge within days. During this period, it is vital to protect young plants from extreme heat and pests. Key summer gardening tasks include regular watering, particularly in the early morning or late evening to prevent evaporation. Mulching helps retain soil moisture and suppress weeds. Deadheading spent flowers encourages new blooms, while pruning maintains plant health and shape. Feeding plants with appropriate fertilizers supports growth. Vigilant pest and disease control, along with consistent weeding, ensures a healthy garden. Additionally, harvesting ripe produce promptly encourages continuous yields. Summer gardening and growing from seed is not only cost-effective but also allows us to experiment with a diverse array of plants and plan our gardens for next year.

Within this digital edition of the Summer Collection's Pocket Companion you'll find information covering all the different seeds sent out across the 11 collections we created for this season. The Pocket Companion sets out tried and trusted methods to succeed with your seed growing and all the details you need to take you through from opening the seed packet through to harvest, including:

- a handy at a glance calendar, completed using a colour coded key, so you know the main stages of growing each seed each month
- details of each plants size, hardiness, preferred growing area as well as timescales for germination and harvest
- detailed sowing and growing instructions.

Happy growing, from

Nic

Sowing & Growing Terminology

Our pocket companions will no doubt reside in the pockets of experienced growers as well as those new to gardening. We all began our knowledge somewhere, so just in case it's helpful to you, here's a glossary of a few terms you'll become familiar with as you grow from seed.

'frost risk has passed': usually late May to early June, when night-time temperatures no longer fall below 0 degrees Celsius and frost is no longer likely.

'germinate/germination': the process of a seed starting to grow, developing a small root and seed leaves.

'prick out': careful movement of a very young seedling, by the seed leave, not stem, from the pot it germinated in to a larger pot or module of its own, to grow on.

'harden off': young plants sown indoors are tender and need to acclimatise to outside conditions before planting out. Place in a sheltered sunny spot outside, or in a cold frame, during the day and bring inside at night. Over a period of 7-10 days increase the time the plants spend outside.

'row': seeds are sown in drills to form a row or a line of vegetables or flowers; seeds are sown in a row to help distinguish the sown seedlings from weeds. Also it allows you to give the correct amount of space for the crops to grow well. It is important to know the distance between rows.

'seed drill': a channel or groove made into the soil, to sow the seeds along. The depth of the drill is determined by the size of the seed. Typically seeds should be sown at a depth three times their width.

'seedling': a tiny plant, usually only with its first leaves growing.

'spacing': the distance between seeds along the drill and also distance between adjacent rows. This is determined by the size of the seed and size of the plant it will grow into. Large plants will need wider spacing between seeds along the drill and between adjacent rows than small plants.

'sow direct': to sow seeds into the soil, usually outside in beds or large containers.

'sow thinly': sprinkle seeds sparingly, so that there is visible space between each seed. If you sow seeds too closely together they will be crowded and will not thrive.

'sow under glass or in a propagator': some seeds must be sown indoors in pots and given some heat to germinate. A sunny windowsill, as well as a greenhouse is a good location for starting off seeds.

'full sun': A position in the garden that receives sun for most of the day.

'thin out seedlings': careful removal of seedlings that are growing too close together. Water the row of seedlings well and then pull out the excess seedlings, leaving a row of single healthy seedlings at the correct spacing from one another.

'transplant': the planting of a small plant, either into a larger pot or from a pot into the final position in the garden, where it will grow on to flower or harvest.

'semi shade / partial sun': The seeds should be sown in a mostly shady place, but with some sun

'successive crops': Crops sown at regular intervals so they mature one after the other.

Auricula

Year 1

Year 2



Hardy and exquisitely formed, auriculas deserve to be looked at close up. You can grow all auriculas in containers. It is one of the best ways to appreciate their beauty and scent. Border auriculas are more robust and put up with the worst of winter weather. All are scented and make good cut flowers.

Sow Auricula seed in spring to mid summer in good seed compost. Sow seed on surface of compost and gently firm. Seal in a polythene bag or cover with a piece of glass and place in a shady spot, either in a greenhouse or cold-frame but do not exclude light which is beneficial for germination. Keep soil damp but not wet. Be aware with late season sowings that higher temperatures can prevent germination. Once most of the seeds have come up, sprinkle a tiny amount of sieved compost or horticultural grit over the roots to anchor them.

Transplant Auriculas when they large enough to handle in 7.5cm pots. Grow on in cool and fairly moist conditions until the Autumn and later plant out 20cm apart where they are to flower in good soil, sun or part shade.

Auriculas may also be sown outdoors in a seed bed in May and June. Mark out shallow drills and sow the seed carefully and thinly, aiming to get a seed every 2cm and then gently rake the soil to cover, and firm with the back of the rake. Water gently if the weather is dry for a period, but do not water too often as this will encourage the roots to form just below the surface and you will be watering all summer long to save your plants. Aim to encourage the root to look further down for water, and you will have a more relaxed summer and a finer show of flowers in the long run.

When the plants have formed their first pair of true leaves, thin them to 10cm apart and firm the soil around the bases. In September or October carefully raise the plants taking a ball of soil with the roots using a trowel and plant them in the flowering site and gently water them in. It is sometimes beneficial to give them a little protection from winter winds for the first year.



Height: to 25cm
Spread: to 20cm
Hardy perennial
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
10 - 30 days



- Sow inside
- Sow outside
- Plant out
- Flower

Broccoli Raab

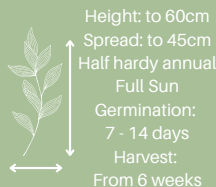
J F M A M J J A S O N D



Broccoli Raab is one of the lesser known vegetables, and despite its name, this vegetable is not a type of broccoli – in fact, it's more closely related to turnips. It was given the common name "broccoli rabe or raab" because it forms little clusters of buds that look similar to heads of broccoli, only smaller. Along with edible bud clusters, the plant has leafy greens and tender stems, all of which are super tasty; in addition to some slight bitterness, this veggie has a pungent flavor, much like a mix between turnip and mustard greens, but with a nuttier taste.

Broccoli Raab is fairly quick to mature, making it an easy crop to grow via direct sowing. To prepare your planting beds, mix plenty of well-rotted compost into your garden soil. Water your planting bed the day before you sow your seeds, or wait to sow until the day after it rains. Soil that is slightly damp but not wet is not required, but will make sowing easier. When you have your seeds and are ready to sow, make a hole approx. 0.5cm deep in the soil for each seed. Space the holes out 20cm apart from each other and pop a seed in each hole.

If sowing indoors in spring, sow seed thinly and cover lightly with a layer of compost or vermiculite. Plant out 30cm apart once seedlings are large enough to handle.



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Spring Cabbage

J F M A M J J A S O N D

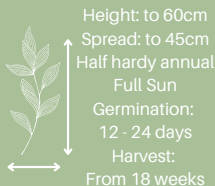


There are few veg that remain enormously productive in the face of extreme cold and exposure. But spring cabbages sown in summer will stand their ground to provide you with delicious home-grown vegetables in the period we usually get a lull in the veggie garden.

Sow seed outdoors from March to May for harvesting in September and October, or sow in July and August for harvesting the following April and May.

Sow thinly direct into finely raked soil at a depth of no more than 1cm. If needed, gently transfer when large enough to handle allowing 40cm between rows and about 25-30cm between plants in the row. Cover with a protective netting or fleece to prevent attack from birds and insects. Place a collar around the stem of each plant to prevent cabbage root fly attacks.

Water the plants thoroughly after planting. Feed cabbages with a nitrogen-rich liquid food every fortnight. Cabbages grow best in well cultivated soil liberally manured the previous autumn.



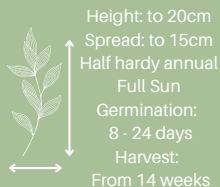
Chicory



Sow seeds Chicory seeds thinly in June or July in a propagator and cover with a fine layer of vermiculate or compost and place in a shaded area. Sowing these seeds earlier will likely result in the plants bolting before you are able to harvest them. Once seedlings are well grown, plant out in a sunny spot 15cm apart in well-drained soil. Your chicory should be ready to begin harvesting in October, or approximately 14 weeks after sowing.

Chicory can be eaten raw or cooked and is a delicious alternative to add to roasts, stir-fries or as a vegetable side dish. For the best flavour, eat soon after picking.

Like rhubarb, chicory can be 'forced' by removing mature roots to a warm, dark place in order to coax them into rapid and early growth. Transplant lifted roots into a plant pot and cover with another, ensuring that any drainage holes on the covering pot are completely sealed. It is important that even the slightest shard of light is excluded from the roots; light will turn your chicons (forced chicory heads) bitter. To harvest, use a sharp knife to cut into and across the top of the root in order to keep the leaves together.



Dwarf French Bean



Sow bean seeds indoors from mid April for transplanting later on, or direct sow outdoors from late May to July.

Indoors, sow bean seeds at a depth of 4cm in 7.5cm pots or trays of free-draining, seed sowing compost. Place in a propagator or seal container inside a plastic bag until germination. Do not exclude light as this helps germination, and keep pots moist. Once germinated, grow on in cooler conditions until all risk of frost has passed and the plants are large enough to be transplanted.

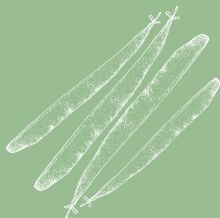
Gradually acclimatise them to outdoor conditions over 7 - 10 days before planting French beans outdoors in rich fertile, well drained soil in full sun with protection from strong winds.

When growing beans, hoe between plants often and water regularly. Provide a compost mulch around the base of bean plants to combat dry periods.

Picking the beans stimulates your plants to produce more and gives you a longer harvest period. Although some bean varieties stay tender as they grow, others become more tough and stringy. Beans are best picked when they are still small and tender.



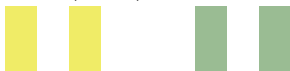
Height: to 45cm
Spread: to 30cm
Half-hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
7 - 10 days
Harvest:
From 11 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Edamame

J F M A M J J A S O N D



Edamame is a frost-tender vegetable that can be planted in late spring in a location with full sun. Two to four weeks before planting, dig a thick layer of compost into the seed bed to provide the plants with sufficient nutrients.

In May and June, direct sow Edamame 1 to 2cm deep, 10cm apart, in rows 60cm apart. For regular harvests over the summer, sow small rows at 10 day intervals.

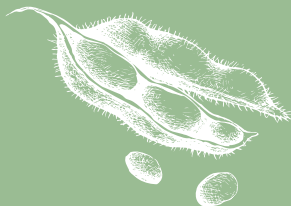
Thin seedlings to 20cm apart when the plants are 20cm tall. Weed shallowly to avoid disturbing the plants' roots.

Water regularly. Edamame tolerates some drought, but yields may suffer. Plants do not generally require staking.

For the best flavor, harvest edamame pods in the evening when they are 5-8cm long, bright green, and plump. Snap or cut (do not tear) pods off plants. Yellow pods and/or leaves indicate that the peak of flavor and texture has passed.



Height: to 90cm
Spread: to 45cm
Half hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
7 - 14 days
Harvest:
From 10 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Fatsia Japonica

SOW AT ANY TIME OF YEAR!

Fatsia Japonica are hardy plants and can be used as a shrub in a shady spot outdoors or as a houseplant indoors. Fatsia doesn't respond well to transplanting and, while cuttings can be used, seeds are the main way that the plant is grown.

Starting seeds indoors or in a greenhouse is best, that way you won't have to consider when to sow fatsia seeds outdoors (I would recommend summer only if you did want to sow them outdoors), where conditions can be too variable. Plant the seeds at twice their depth in a good quality compost. Fatsia requires heat to germinate, if you have a heated propagator this is the best place to start these seeds, otherwise in a sunny windowsill is a good place. Add a little water to the compost and cover the tops of pots with a lid or seal inside a polythene bag to keep seeds and soil warm and moist.

Water as needed, about every few days. You should see germinations in two to four weeks. Remove lid/cover once the seedlings emerge from the soil but keep the pot either in the propagator or on the windowsill for another week or two before continuing to grow in warm (but not hot) conditions. Continue to keep the compost moist, but not wet.

When the plants reach 10-15cm tall pot them on into larger pots and keep them warm. You can continue to grow Fatsia as a houseplant, potting on as required when the plant outgrows its pot, or transplant seedlings outside to their permanent beds once the soil outdoors between May and September.

To help the plant get established, feed it regularly with a weak all purpose fertiliser between Spring and Autumn for the first few years.



Height: to 200cm
Spread: to 200cm
Perennial Shrub
Semi-shade
Germination:
14 - 28 days



Garlic Kale

J F M A M J J A S O N D



Garlic Kale is a hardy and flavoursome green, originating from Ethiopian cabbage. Successional sowing will provide continuous luscious greens to add to your favourite dishes. Harvest from January to December, as this variety of kale can be grown through the winter in a greenhouse.

Kale is amongst the most nutrient-dense foods, providing us with essential vitamins and antioxidants. Garlic kale has a crisp texture, with a pleasant kale flavour and slightly garlic aftertaste. Good for salads when young and tender, as leaves get larger they can be steamed. Immature flower stems can be cooked like broccoli.

Seeds can be sown all year for baby leaf production inside on a windowsill in trays of good quality, moist seed compost. Sow seeds thinly, cover with 1cm compost and keep moist, not wet. When seedlings have produced their second true leaf you can begin to harvest as a cut-and-come-again salad leaf.

Seeds can also be sown directly into beds which they will grow between and grown on for larger plants which can be cooked like spinach. Alternatively, sow seeds in over winter in a cold greenhouse, for fresh leaves through winter and early spring.



Height: to 90cm

Spread: to 60cm

Hardy annual

Full Sun

Germination:

7 - 14 days

Harvest:

From 4 weeks



Sow inside



Sow outside



Plant out



Harvest

Kohl Rabi



Sow seeds thinly in a well prepared seed bed in shallow drills 1.5cm deep in rows spaced 30cm apart from April. Alternatively beginning in March sow two seeds per cell in modules in a greenhouse.

Sow seed in succession, every 3-4 weeks, to prolong the cropping period.

Outdoor sowings should be thinned out to 15cm apart and grown on to maturity. As soon as greenhouse seedlings show their first pair of leaves thin modules to one seedling per cell. Gradually harden off before planting out to the same spacings as detailed above. Cover seedlings with a protective netting or fleece to prevent attack from birds and insects.

Prepare the soil in early spring by adding plenty of well rotted manure to the soil to improve its structure and fertility. Apply lime to acid soils to reduce the acidity and lessen the risk of clubroot.

Water regularly to keep the soil moist at all times. Adequate moisture is essential for the most succulent roots and to minimise woodiness, bitter flesh and bolting. Harvest the bulbs from July to October while they are still tender and range between the size of a golf ball and the size of a tennis ball.



Height: to 35cm
Spread: to 30cm
Hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
5 - 14 days
Harvest:
From 8 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Poppy / Papaver



A sprinkling of scarlet red blooms among swaying meadow grasses creates the perfect picture of the British countryside. The iconic wild poppy is instantly recognisable by its gently fluttering petals.

Poppy is the common name for plants in the Papaveraceae family. Within this group there are annuals, perennials and biennials. They include oriental poppies, field poppies, Welsh poppies and Himalayan poppies. Their summer flowers may be fleeting but they make a wonderful addition to the garden. Large-flowered oriental poppies are the most popular poppy to grow. They have hairy flower stems and foliage. Flower petals can be ruffled, crimped or shaggy, and range in colour from white to pink, purple and red.

Direct sow Poppy seeds outdoors where they are to grow in spring or autumn. Choose a position in full sun on fertile, well drained soil which has been raked to a fine tilth. Sow seeds thinly, just below the soil surface. Water the ground regularly, especially during dry periods. When seedlings are large enough to handle, thin them out to 30cm apart.

Feed and water poppy plants frequently throughout the summer. Annual Poppies can be left to set seed and die back naturally, before discarding the plants on the compost heap. The fallen seed will germinate in the following year to provide a new display. Poppy seed heads can also make a stunning addition to vases.

Caution: All poppies are poisonous.



Height: to 90cm
Spread: to 25cm
Hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
7 - 14 days



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Flower

Purple Sprouting Broccoli



Sow thinly 6mm deep in a seed tray of good quality seed compost and lightly cover with a sprinkling of vermiculite. Place tray in a propagator until after germination. Transplant seedlings into 7.5cm pots and grow on until plants have 4-5 true leaves.

Alternatively, sow sprouting broccoli seeds in a well-prepared seed bed from June at a depth of 10mm and spaced 20cm apart. Transplant to their final positions around 5 weeks later when the seedlings have four or five leaves.

When growing purple sprouting broccoli, choose a sheltered position in firm, rich fertile, well drained soil in full sun. Prepare the soil in early spring by adding plenty of well rotted farmyard manure to the soil to improve its structure and fertility.

Plant purple sprouting broccoli deeply for stability at a distance of 60cm apart, and cover with a protective netting or fleece to prevent attack from birds and insects. Water the plants thoroughly after planting.

Harvest regularly, cutting the central spear with a sharp knife first as this encourages the side shoots to develop quickly.



Scabious stellata

J F M A M J J A S O N D



Scabious, also known as pincushion flowers, are easy-to-grow. They are button-like in shape and have petals that flutter in the breeze. Under ideal growing conditions, blooms can last from spring to the first frost, although they might slow down in the high heat of summer. As pretty as the flowers of *Scabious stellata* are, it's the seed heads which are the true showstopper! The spherical seed heads are a silvery colour similar to the seed heads of Honesty (*Lunaria*). Equally useful as a cut fresh flower or seed head, Ping Pong (our favourite variety) gives several handfuls of stems from a single plant alone.

Sow *Scabious stellata* indoors in early spring or autumn. Sow seed thinly, lightly cover with compost or vermiculite and keep moist. These seeds may benefit from gentle heat to encourage germination, often a windowsill will be sufficient. Initially, water the seeds from below and keep the soil damp but not wet and do not exclude light. Place in a propagator or seal the seed tray inside a polythene bag until after germination.

When seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant and grow them on in cooler conditions until large enough to plant outdoors. When *Scabious* plants are well grown and all risk of frost has passed, acclimatise them to outdoor conditions over 7 to 10 days and plant out.

If using the seed heads in floral arrangements, a light spritz of hairspray will make them more robust. *Scabious* will self-seed in borders from one year to the next.



Height: to 90cm
Spread: to 40cm
Hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
10 - 21 days



Sow inside



Sow outside



Plant out



Flower

Sweet Rocket

Year 1

J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D



Year 2

J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D



Sweet rocket, *Hesperis matronalis*, is a pretty biennial, bearing white or purple flowers similar to honesty. Leave them to seed themselves and they will maintain this diversity indefinitely, gradually naturalising over a large area. The flowers' fragrance is as sweet as a violets, and most pronounced in the evening. It looks good when allowed to drift, naturally through an informal sunny or partially shaded border, especially in a cottage garden or wildlife garden scheme.

Sow Sweet Rocket from April to July on the surface of a good seed compost. Do not cover the seed. Place in a propagator or seal the seed tray inside a polythene bag until after germination. Keep the surface of the compost moist but not waterlogged and do not exclude light, as this helps germination. When seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant into 7.5cm pots and grow on in cooler conditions. When the plants are well grown gradually acclimatise them to outdoor conditions for 10-15 days before planting outdoors in late Summer/early Autumn. Alternatively, over winter Sweet Rocket plants in a cold frame and plant them out the following spring. Plant at a distance of 15cm apart in well drained, reliably moist soil in full sun or semi shade.

Alternatively direct sow Sweet Rocket outdoors in September and October where they are to grow in soil which has been raked to a fine tilth. Sow seeds thinly, at a depth of 6mm in drills spaced 30cm apart. Water the ground regularly, especially during dry periods. When seedlings are large enough to handle, thin them out to 15cm apart.

Feed and water regularly until fully established. These plants will often seed freely to create large clumps of seedlings that will flower in the following year.



Sow inside

Sow outside



Plant out



Flower

Turnip



Early sowings are best made under cloches. Turnips grow best on rich well manured soil but will grow on ordinary fertile soil to which plenty of well rotted compost has been added .

Sow seeds in succession from March to mid summer direct into growing site in seed drills 2cm deep with rows spaced 30cm apart. Sucessional sowing should be made every 2 to 3 weeks to prolong the harvest period.

As soon as first rough leaves appear , thin to 10cm (4in) apart . Harvest from when roots are golf ball size, pull alternate roots to maximise crop. Water regularly during hot dry weather to prevent roots from going woody

Turnips can also be multisown in modules and transplanted into final position in June as small clusters and harvested as small roots and added to salads.

Turnips should be grown quickly and kept well watered. Harvest them before they get too large for the best flavour. The smaller the roots, the sweeter they are.



Winter Density

J F M A M J J A S O N D



Despite its name, if you time your successional sowings just right you can harvest the Winter Density variety of Lettuce all year round. This dwarf, compact lettuce has crisp, succulent, dark green hearts.

Winter Density is a popular variety for autumn sowing; my top tip if you are able to is to sow your final crops in a greenhouse or polytunnel to protect them from the worst of the winter weather. But this isn't a necessity and September sown plants will stand through winter and be good for harvesting through to the following spring.

Direct sow lettuce seeds outdoors from February to September into well prepared, fertile, moist soil in sun or semi shade. Sow seeds thinly at a depth of 1cm in drills 30cm apart in soil which has been raked to a fine tilth. When large enough to handle, thin out seedlings to 30cm apart and cover with a protective netting or fleece to prevent attack from birds and insects. Sow just a few seeds once a fortnight for a regular supply. Water lettuce frequently and hoe between plants regularly to prevent weeds from establishing.

In extreme hot or dry weather Winter Density may bolt so watering is particularly critical during the 2 weeks before harvesting.



Height: to 20cm
Spread: to 30cm
Half hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
7 - 14 days
Harvest:
10 - 14 weeks

-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

My Gardening Notes

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More from Collie Flowers

The Collections:

Summer Salads

The Greenhouse Collection

Winter Vegetable

Bedding & Borders

The Kitchen Garden

Flowers for container growing

The F1 Seed Collection

The Cottage Garden

The Essential Herb Garden

Taste The Rainbow

Grow Your Own Christmas
Dinner

Vegetables for container
growing

Mini Bundles

Brassicas

Essential Edibles

Perfect for Pollinators

Half-Hardy Annuals

Herbal Infusions

Hardy Annuals

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