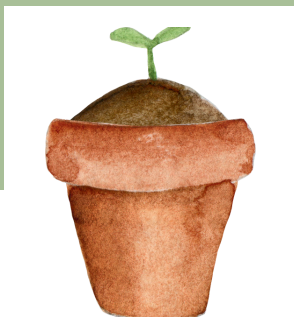




Making The Most Of Every Season

The Summer Collections 2025: 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 Collections' Pocket Companion you'll find information covering all the different seeds sent out across the 15 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 incase its 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 plans 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.

Basil

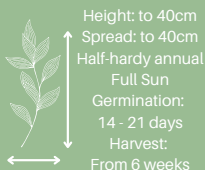


Sow seed February to May on the surface of good free-draining, seed compost. Cover with a fine sprinkling of vermiculite. Place in a propagator or seal container inside a polythene bag until after germination. Keep compost on the dry side at all times, water lightly as seedlings emerge.

Transplant seedlings when large enough to handle into 7.5cm pots and continue to grow on indoors in cooler conditions. Basil can be kept indoors, making a good companion plant for tomatoes and but also planted out. Acclimatise to outside conditions before planting out after all risk of frost, 30cm apart. Plant into vegetable borders or containers.

Harvest leaves as required, outdoors May to October, all year round indoors. Tear leaves rather than chop, to retain the aroma. Preserve leaves by freezing or steeping in oil.

Flowers may appear from July onwards, pinch our flowers to prolong harvesting period.



Cactus




It's easy to grow cacti from seed, and often you never quite know what you're going to grow which just adds to the excitement. Cacti are low maintenance plants, and growing them from seed is the perfect way to start a new collection that will produce a fascinating display lasting for many years. With maturity, many Cacti will produce bright, showy flowers. Although they're well suited to window sills and sun rooms, over time you can even move them into your garden (in a pot) for the summer and greenhouses for winter.

Sow cactus seed on the surface of a free draining, gritty compost and cover with a very fine sprinkling of sand. Place in a propagator or seal the seed tray inside a polythene bag, until after germination, which can be erratic and usually takes 2-3 weeks, but can be as long as 1-3 months. Do not exclude light when growing cacti as this helps germination.

Keep the surface of the compost moist but not waterlogged. When seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant them into trays or 5cm pots of gritty potting mix and continue to grow in warm conditions. Once they are well grown, pot cactus plants on into 9cm pots, and water carefully until established.

Grow cacti in full light with some shelter from the hottest sun. In summer, water cacti regularly with rain water. Allow the compost to dry out slightly between watering. In winter, while the plant is dormant, gradually reduce watering and allow the compost to remain dry. An average temperature of 10-23C is ideal, although many Cacti can tolerate lower temperatures down to a minimum of 5C.



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Flower

Carrots



Early maturing varieties: sow under cloches in March, or unprotected outdoors from April to August.

Maincrop varieties: Sow outdoors from April to June.

Direct sow carrot seed outdoors, in a weed free, sunny position in fertile, light, well drained soil. Carrots dislike freshly manured soils so seed beds are best prepared in autumn, with the soil finely sieved, well in advance of spring sowings. Sow carrot seeds thinly at a depth of 1cm in drills 30cm apart. Germination will take 10 to 20 days. When large enough to handle, thin out the seedlings within each row to 5cm apart. Where space is limited, growing carrots in containers of soil, not compost, will also produce a good crop.

Carrot fly is a well known problem. Prevention is the best cure; sow seed thinly and avoid crushing the foliage as you thin out seedlings or hand weed. Barriers 60cm high will exclude the low-flying female flies who lay the larvae.

Forcing varieties: Some varieties are suitable for forcing to produce an early crop. These can be sown under glass from November to February.



Height: to 45cm
 Spread: to 30cm
 Hardy annual
 Sun or semi-shade
 Germination:
 15 - 28 days
 Harvest:
 from 12 weeks



- Sow inside
- Sow outside
- Plant out
- Harvest

Chervil



Chervil makes for an ideal alternative to parsley as a garnish or in dishes as they are similar in flavour.

Direct sow chervil seeds outdoors from March to May into well prepared, fertile, moist soil in dappled or semi shade. Sow seeds thinly at a depth of 1cm in drills 30cm apart. When large enough to handle, thin out seedlings to 15cm apart. Make regular sowings for a constant supply.

Late summer sowings in the greenhouse will provide a ready supply of fresh chervil leaves throughout winter. Alternatively sow indoors in pots on the windowsill for fresh leaves virtually all year round.

Chervil plants can quickly run to flower if not kept watered. Chervil leaves should be harvested 6-8 weeks after sowing before flowering commences.



Height: to 45cm
Spread: to 25cm
Hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
7 - 10 days
Harvest:
From 6 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest
-  Flower

Climbing French Bean



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

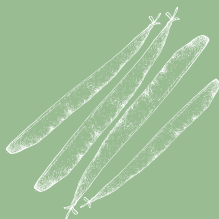
Indoors, sow bean seeds at a depth of 4cm in 7.5cm pots or trays of free-draining, seed sowing compost. Place in a propagator or seal container inside a plastic bag until germination. Do not exclude light as this helps germination, and keep pots moist. Once germinated, grow on in cooler conditions until all risk of frost has passed and the climbing bean 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. Climbing french beans grow best with support such as a trellis or teepee of 3 to 5 bamboo canes tied at the top with 1 plant per support.

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 180cm
Spread: to 30cm
Half-hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
7 - 10 days
Harvest:
From 11 weeks



- Sow inside
- Sow outside
- Plant out
- Harvest

Dill

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



This aromatic annual can be grown for its seeds or its rich, aniseed flavoured foliage. The feathery dill leaves make an attractive addition to a sunny herb garden. Dill is tolerant of most conditions and requires little maintenance.

Direct sow dill seeds outdoors from April to July into well prepared soil in full sun. Sow seeds thinly into drills 1cm deep and 15cm apart. Thin seedlings to 30cm apart when large enough to handle. Make regular sowings for a successional harvest.

To begin the harvest a little earlier Dill can also be sown indoors in March on the surface of a free draining, damp seed compost. Cover with a fine sprinkling of vermiculite and place in a propagator, or seal container inside a polythene bag until after germination. Do not exclude light as this will aid germination. When large enough to handle, thin out seedlings to 5cm apart. Gradually acclimatise plants to outdoor conditions over 7 - 10 days before planting outdoors, spaced 30cm apart, on well drained soil in full sun when all risk of frost has passed.

Dill seed has a variety of uses both in the kitchen and in the garden. In the kitchen dill seed can be a flavorful seasoning for any soups and stews as well as pickled vegetables. The most effective way to save dill seeds is to let the plants themselves dry out in the garden. Let your dill plants produce their beautiful yellow blooms, then simply wait. Your dill plants will be ready to have seeds collected when they are brown and dry.



Height: to 90cm
Spread: to 30cm
Hardy annual
Full Sun
Germination:
10 - 14 days
Harvest:
From 8 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

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.

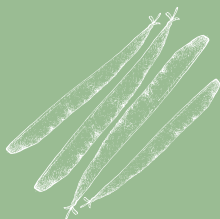
Gradually acclimatise them to outdoor conditions over 7 - 10 days before planting French beans outdoors in rich fertile, well drained soil in full sun with protection from strong winds.

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

Endive



Endive is a compact, lettuce-like plant, available in an attractive range of colours and shapes, from bright green and frilly, to rounded and red.

Sow seed thinly direct outside or in a pot on the windowsill or in a greenhouse at 3 to 4 weekly intervals for regular harvests throughout the year. When sowing outdoors, sow seed 5mm deep, in drills 30cm apart. Thin seedlings to 25cm apart, or leave unthinned as baby salad leaves. For indoor sowing thin to 2 seedlings per 9cm pot. Keep the soil moist, watering in dry spells, to ensure consistent growth and prevent plants running to seed (bolting) prematurely. Give shade in hot weather, to prevent the leaves becoming tough and unpalatable. Cover with fleece or make summer sowings in a spot that gets some light shade.

Harvest either as cut and come again salad leaves or mature heads. As leaves harvest from 6-8 weeks, mature heads are slower growing and larger, taking around 10-12 weeks to mature. Endive with large, flat, broad leaves are more robust, so useful for winter harvesting, whereas those with a loose rosette of thin, frilly leaves tend to be more tolerant of hot weather. Blanching the leaves by covering for 2 weeks before harvesting can reduce their bitter flavour. Plant only a few plants at a time, as they deteriorate rapidly afterwards, especially in warm or rainy weather, so need to be used promptly.



Height: to 15cm
Spread: to 20cm
Hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
7 - 10 days
Harvest:
From 6 weeks

-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Hollyhock

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







Hollyhocks are easy to grow and their blooms come in a wide range of jewel colours, flowering from early summer to autumn. Their tall spires look good grown against walls and fences and are stalwarts of cottage gardens. At the base is a clump of large, round, mid-green leaves. The perfect plant for the rear of borders where it will rise up to 5 foot, and more.

Sow Hollyhock indoors in from January to March or July to September. Sow seed thinly on the surface of a good quality seed compost, 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, but if sowing over summer the greenhouse or a cold frame will suffice. 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 Spring sown Erigeron plants are well grown and all risk of frost has passed, acclimatise them to outdoor conditions over 7 to 10 days and plant out. For summer sown plants, ensure they are in the ground whilst it is still warm and they have a chance to establish before the frosts.

Hollyhocks are full hardy and don't require any special treatment over winter. Remove all dead leaves and discard plants that have been badly effected by rust disease which Hollyhocks can be susceptible to. This is easy to spot as the leaves and stems will be covered in orange-brown spots. Remove infected leaves as soon as you spot them and burn them.



Height: to 150cm
Spread: to 50cm
Hardy perennial
Full sun
Germination:
5 - 10 days

-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Flower

Honesty



Honesty, Lunaria, is an old-fashioned cottage garden plant, known more for its seeds than its flowers. The distinctive flat, translucent papery pods, which hold the dark seeds, are often used in dried flower arranging but, if left on the plant, they're good for adding winter interest to the garden. The purple or white fragrant flowers in spring and early summer are very attractive to pollinating insects.

Sow Honesty seeds on the surface of a good quality seed compost and gently firm down. Place the seed tray in a propagator or seal inside a clear polythene bag until germination. Keep the compost damp but not wet and do not exclude light. Alternatively, as Honesty is a strong self-seeder, you may choose to direct sow your Honesty seeds in August, when they may otherwise naturally fall from a plant.

When seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant into the ground at a distance of 30cm apart on any fertile, well drained soil in semi-shade. Honesty develops a large taproot and therefore is best planted out when young - larger plants tend not to establish as well as younger ones. Which is why we don't recommend pricking out/potting on and then transplanting into its final position.

Honesty is a member of the Brassica family and therefore is susceptible to the same diseases as many cabbages, such as the fungal disease, club root.

Honesty is a low-maintenance plant and doesn't require feeding or cutting back.



Height: to 75cm
Spread: to 40cm
Biennial
Semi-shade
Germination:
10 - 28 days



Sow inside



Sow outside



Plant out



Flower

Kale



Direct sow outdoors into final position for growing, or in a well prepared seedbed for transplanting to their final positions later on. Sow at a depth of 1cm and distance of 25cm between rows. Kale is often sown in a seedbed, then later moved to its final growing position because it is slow to grow and takes up space during the peak growing period.

Kale plants can be transplanted to their final positions approximately 5 weeks from sowing (or later noting above). When transplanting kale, plant it slightly deeper in the ground than it was in the seedbed. Plant kale 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. Prepare the soil in early spring by adding plenty of well rotted farmyard 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.

Winter varieties, like Red Russian, can be sown outdoor in summer, or under cover in the autumn, and give very tender, flavoursome leaves to use raw in salads or cooked. Winter varieties are often softer and sweeter than many other varieties. Excellent winter hardiness makes kale a useful winter to spring vegetable at a time when fresh garden produce is scarce.

Start to harvest young leaves from the top of the plant from September onwards. Side-shoots are formed after the main crown is harvested and these are ready for use in February and March. Pick shoots that are 10–15cm long and still young. For salad leaves Kale can be sown indoors all year round. Harvest 30 days from sowing during summer and up to 60 days during winter.



Height: to 90cm
 Spread: to 60cm
 Hardy annual
 Sun or semi-shade
 Germination:
 4 - 7 days
 Harvest:
 From 11 weeks



- Sow inside
- Sow outside
- Plant out
- Harvest

Lettuce, Crispheads



As the name suggests, Crisphead lettuces (including iceberg types) have a crisp texture and leave a mild taste in the mouth. They have a cabbage-like round head that is formed by the overlapping curved leaves. As the leaves are compactly packed the round head formed is also tight and compact.

Direct sow lettuce seeds outdoors from March to August 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. Make regular sowings for a regular supply throughout the summer and autumn.

Water lettuce frequently and hoe between plants regularly to prevent weeds from establishing.

Crispheads are generally slow to bolt, and perform reliably whether the summer is wet or dry. However, extreme dry weather may still cause heads of lettuce plants to 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:
From 11 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Parsley

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



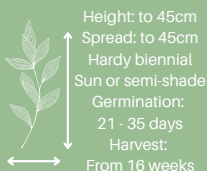
Native to the Mediterranean, parsley is a rich source of vitamin C and iron, and is said to cure bad breath and cleanse the skin. Easy to grow, even in part shade, parsley can be grown in containers or borders, and freshly picked leaves will depth and flavour to your cooking. According to an old English folk tale, parsley grows best in a household where the wife wears the trousers. Whether you choose to grow parsley for mythical or feminist reasons, or for its culinary and medicinal properties, it's a great addition to your herb collection.

Grow curled and flat-leaf parsley in moist but well-drained soil in sun to partial shade. Harvest the leaves as and when you need to. Sow seed every few weeks for a successional harvest.

Direct sow parsley seed outdoors from May to July. Grow parsley in a well prepared seedbed in full sun or partial shade. Sow seeds thinly at a depth of 1cm in drills 30cm apart. When large enough to handle, thin out seedlings to 25cm apart. Parsley seeds are very slow to germinate taking up to 35 days, especially in wet, cold soils.

Seeds can also be sown indoors August to April for fresh leaves all year round. Sow into 7.5cm pots of free-draining seed compost. After gemination thin pot grown parsley to a few strong seedlings per pot and keep on a sunny windowsill for easy picking as required, or if preferred gradually acclimatise parsley plants to outdoor conditions over 7 - 10 days before planting outdoors when risk of frost has passed.

Feed and water parsley plants regularly. Harvest parsley leaves regularly to encourage fresh new growth. Parsley is biennial and will require replacing after the second season once it begins to flower and produce seed.



Pea



Direct sow outdoors: 5cm deep in flat-bottomed drills spaced 5cm, and in rows 80cm apart. For regular harvest sow sucessionally, every 10 day or so March to May. If the weather is unseasonably cold, start your peas off in a greenhouse or on a sunny windowsill, and transfer your seedlings into the garden when temperatures rise.

Improve your soil by digging in well rotted manure or compost. Prepare the soil by raking until it is fine and crumbly, removing any large stones. Water the drill before sowing to stimulate germination.

When plants are 10cm tall provide twiggy sticks for support. Peas can be protected with netting if pigeons are a problem.

The peas will be ready to harvest around 11-15 weeks from sowing date, and regular picking will encourage further cropping. Shelling varieties are ready to pick once the pods are swollen with peas. Mangetouts are best picked while the young pods are still completely flat while Sugar Snaps should be harvested when the pods are semi-mature and just beginning to swell.



Height: to 180cm
Spread: to 60cm
Hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
21 - 30 days
Harvest:
From 11 - 15 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Purple Sprouting Broccoli



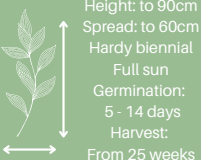
Sow thinly 6mm deep in a seed tray of good quality seed compost and lightly cover with a sprinkling of vermiculite. Place tray in a propagator until after germination. Transplant seedlings into 7.5cm pots and grow on until plants have 4-5 true leaves.

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.



Rocket

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



A year-round favourite, sow Rocket seeds April to September outdoors and October to March indoors.

Sow seed thinly direct outside or in a pot on the windowsill or in a greenhouse at 3 to 4 weekly intervals for regular harvests throughout the year. When sowing outdoors, sow seed 1cm deep, in drills 30cm apart. Thin seedlings to 25cm apart, or leave unthinned as baby salad leaves. For indoor sowing thin to 2 seedlings per 9cm pot.

Keep the soil moist, watering in dry spells, to ensure consistent growth and prevent plants running to seed (bolting) prematurely. Give rocket some shade in hot weather, to prevent the leaves becoming tough and unpalatable. Cover with fleece or make summer sowings in a spot that gets some light shade.

Rocket typically flowers between May and August. Most rocket flowers are edible, however do check individual seed packs for confirmation. If you allow some plants to flower and produce seeds, they'll self-sow to give you new plants without any effort. When harvesting pick a few leaves from several plants. If you take lots of leaves from one plant, growth will be weakened.

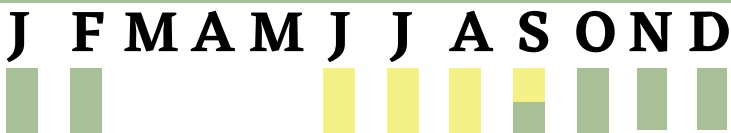


Height: to 15cm
Spread: to 15cm
Hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
7 - 10 days
Harvest:
From 6 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Spinach



Winter hardy spinach will stand for a long time over winter, making it an idea vegetable to see us through some of the leaner months in the veggie garden.

Direct sow outdoors June to September in an open sunny position. Sow seeds at 4 week intervals for continuous cropping. Sow seed thinly, 1cm deep in broad drills 30cm apart. Thin seedlings to 20cm apart when large enough to handle. Water regularly to aid germination and as the plants get established.

Before sowing enrich the soil by adding garden compost to the area you will be growing Spinach in, approx. 2 buckets per metre squared and raking until it is fine and crumbly, removing any large stones.

Protect the plants from birds by covering them with netting or fleece.

Harvest by picking a few leaves from each plant rather than stripping a whole plant. Snap leaves off close to the ground. If there are more leaves ready than you can use it is still best to pick them to encourage a steady supply of young green leaves.



Height: to 30cm
Spread: to 30cm
Hardy biennial
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
6 - 10 days
Harvest:
From 6 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Spring Cabbage

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

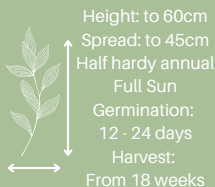


There are few veg that remain enormously productive in the face of extreme cold and exposure. But spring cabbages sown in summer will stand their ground to provide you with delicious home-grown vegetables in the period we usually get a lull in the veggie garden.

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.



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



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

Swiss Chard

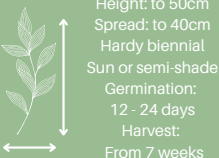


Our Rainbow Mix Swiss Chard is a stunning combination of vivid red, yellow and white stems supporting a lush dark green canopy. Easy to cultivate and with a broad tolerance of soils and seasons. Water plants often during dry spells in the summer.

Direct sow seed outdoors from March to August, in a well prepared, moist, fertile seedbed in full sun or partial shade.

Sow seeds thinly at a depth of 1cm in drills 30cm apart. Thin seedlings to 7cm apart for 'baby leaves' which will be ready to harvest approximately 50 days from sowing. For larger leaves thin to 15cm apart, or 25cm for mature plants.

Harvest regularly, and the plants will produce continually. Use the "cut-and-come-again" harvesting technique, taking the largest, oldest leaves and leaving the young ones to continue growing. If chard plants become overgrown, they become less flavorful, so it is often worth harvesting even if you don't intend to eat it, pop it on the compost and your next harvest for eating should be tasty.



Wallflower

Year 1

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



What spring garden would be complete without a bed of delightful, sweet-scented Wallflowers, harbingers of warmer weather to come? Very easy to grow and rewarding; Wallflowers respond excellently to the sow and forget technique - bare patches sown with the absolute minimum of fuss in mid-August will start flowering the following April. Although technically a short-lived perennial, these perform much better as a (hardy) biennial.

Sow Wallflower seeds from May 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 seedlings are well grown gradually acclimatise them to outdoor conditions for 10-15 days before planting outdoors in late Summer/early Autumn. Alternatively, over winter Wallflower plants in a cold frame and plant them out the following spring. Plant at a distance of 25cm apart in well drained, reliably moist soil in full sun or semi shade.

Alternatively direct sow Wallflower seeds outdoors in between August 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 25cm apart. Water the ground regularly, especially during dry periods. When seedlings are large enough to handle, thin them out to 25cm apart.



Sow inside

Sow outside



Plant out



Flower

Welsh Onion

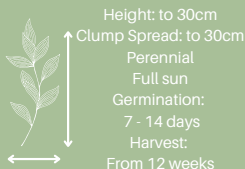


Welsh onion, also known as Welsh bunching onion, Japanese leek and stone leek is a non-bulbing onion, giving clumps of spring onions with a mild, chive-like flavour. The onions can be added raw to salads, stir-fried and sautéed and can also be used as a garnish.

Sow seeds indoors in February or March, transplanting between April and May, or outdoors from April to July. Whether sowing Welsh Onion seed indoors or outdoors, sow liberally 1cm deep in drills 15cm apart. As the seeds are fine, water the drill prior to sowing seeds to prevent them from washing away. If required during dry spells, water as needed.

Welsh onion is perennial – simply lift clumps, harvest what you need to and replant, and they will develop new clumps you can harvest from in future. Although Welsh onions are non-bulbing, they will form small bulbs after being in the soil for several months. No thinning is required. However if plants are densely packed, thinnings can be a great addition to salads and stir fries before your main harvest .

Harvesting can usually start 12 weeks after sowing. Use a small fork or trowel to gently lift the plant out of the ground rather than pull and risk snapping it. After year 1, begin harvesting from mid-Spring.



Winter Calendula



If a pop of bright colour is missing from your winter garden, winter flowering Calendula may well be what you're missing. Flowering continuously from late autumn this is a useful filler for winter baskets and tubs on the patio, with its long flowering period and contrasting green foliage it makes for a bright and attractive flower during the winter months.

The flowers are good for cutting, have edible petals and are also used by herbalists to make skincare products. Plants often self-seed from year to year. Calendulas are unfussy plants that do well in most ordinary garden soil, including poor, dry soil. They flower best in full sun, but also tolerate light shade.




Direct sow seeds outdoors where they are to grow between July and September. Choose a position in full sun on well drained soil which has been raked to a fine tilth. Sow seeds thinly, at a depth of 1cm in drills spaced 10cm apart and lightly cover seed to exclude light. Water the ground regularly, especially during dry periods. To avoid overcrowding, thin seedlings in October or early November before they cease growth for the winter.

Water regularly until plants are fully established. Dead head Calendula regularly to provide a longer display.



Height: to 30cm
Spread: to 20cm
Hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
5 - 10 days



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Flower

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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Grow Your Own Christmas
Dinner

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