



Let's Get Growing!

The Winter Collection:
Pocket Companion &
Growing Guide



Ready, Steady, Grow

Winter can be a quiet time in the garden, as many plants are dormant. But if your green fingers are itching and you're craving some time outdoors, there's still plenty to do in the garden during the winter months. There are also plenty of plants to enjoy at this time of year. And that's what Seasons is all about - making the most of every one of them, with jobs to do and beauty surrounding us.

No matter whether you want to fill your borders with flowers, become self-sufficient with food from your allotment, are growing in containers or have a sprawling garden, with Seasons and your Collie Flowers' Pocket Companion guiding you, this winter you'll be making a head start on growing amazing vegetables, herbs and flowers.

Within this digital edition of the Winter 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 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.

Aster



Sow indoors in March and April, sprinkling seed thinly on the surface of a good free draining, damp seed compost. Do not cover seed, and until germination water the tray or pot from below to avoid washing the seed away. Place in a propagator or seal container inside a polythene bag until after germination. Do not exclude light at any stage, as this helps germination.

Transplant seedlings when large enough to handle into trays or 7.5cm pots. Grow on in cooler, well-lit conditions for 2 to 3 weeks, before hardening off and planting out after all risk of frost has passed. Plant out 15-25cm apart.

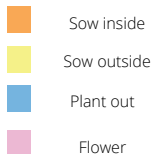
Later outdoor sowings in May can be made direct into the flowering site. Create shallow drills and water them prior to finely sprinkling seed. clumps in shallow drills. Outside sowings should be gradually thinned to the same spacings as above when the seedlings are large enough to handle.

Asters grow in most moisture-retentive soil types that are fertile or have been improved with organic matter such as garden compost. They are happiest in full sun but can cope with light shade.

Asters are popular plants, unrivalled for their range of late-season flower colour between summer and the end of autumn. Asters lend themselves well to a range of garden styles from prairie plantings to cottage gardens and mixed borders.



Height: to 45cm
Spread: to 30cm
Half-hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
7 - 21 days



Basil

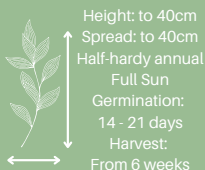


Sow seed February to May on the surface of good free-draining, seed compost. Cover with a fine sprinkling of vermiculite. Place in a propagator or seal container inside a polythene bag until after germination. Keep compost on the dry side at all times, water lightly as seedlings emerge.

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.



Bergamot

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



Bergamot, Bee Balm, even Monarda, this plant is known by many names and comes in many varieties. This growing guide focusses on Wild Bergamot, the herb come wildflower that's easy to grow, beautiful, and highly attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds.

Sow seed indoors October to March on the surface of good free-draining, seed compost. Cover with a fine sprinkling, no more than 5mm 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. Acclimatise to outside conditions before planting out after all risk of frost, 30cm apart.

This herbaceous perennial wildflower has a long blooming period and can flower anytime from early to mid-summer through to autumn. The flowers are tubular with prominent lips at the opening. They are pale pinkish-purple and grow in rounded clusters atop tall leafy stems. Keep plants thinned so they don't create extremely dense clusters. Thinning will increase plant vigour and health while improving air circulation and helping prevent disease. When plants have died back to the ground at the end of each season, remove any remaining above-ground stems and leafy debris.



Broad Bean

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



Sown Broad Beans in late winter (indoors or outdoors with the protection of a cloche or similar) or spring (outdoors), although in mild regions they can also be sown in late autumn. Plants grown indoors should be hardened off before planting out.

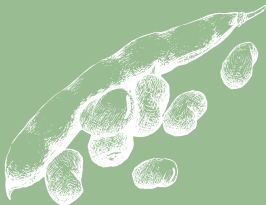
Grow beans in full sun on rich fertile, well manured soil with protection from strong winds. Plant broad beans in double rows set 25cm apart and allowing at least 60cm between each double row. Sow broad beans at a depth of 5cm deep and a distance of 25cm apart within each row and water well. When sown indoors in pots plant one per module or small pot at the same depth.

When growing broad beans, support the plants by placing a cane or stick at each corner of a double row and tying in with string, especially in windy gardens. Keep well watered, particularly as flowers begin to set and hoe between rows regularly. Pinch out the growing tips after the first flowers have set pods to deter blackfly and encourage further pods to set.

When picking pods to shell, wait until the beans are visible through the pod. But don't leave them too long – the scar on the bean should still be white or green, not black, as the beans will become tough at this stage. Small beans are sweeter and more tender than large ones.



Height: to 100cm
Spread: to 45cm
Hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
8 - 10 days
Harvest:
From 13 weeks for
spring sowings



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Brussel Sprouts

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

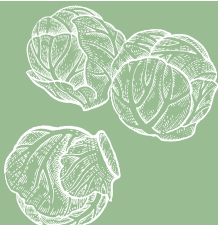


Sow Brussels Sprout seed indoors from February in 7.5cm pots or trays of free-draining, sowing compost and cover with a thin layer of vermiculite. Place in a propagator or seal inside a plastic bag until germination. Once germinated, grow on in cooler conditions until all risk of frost has passed and plants are large enough to be transplanted. They may require potting on prior to being planted out.

Direct sow outdoors from March into a well prepared seedbed, for transplanting to their final positions later on. Sow at a depth of 13mm and distance of 30cm between rows.

Acclimatise to outdoor conditions before planting outdoors, 60cm apart, in firm, rich fertile, well drained soil. Cover with protective netting or fleece to prevent attack from birds and insects.

Flavour is improved once the sprouts have been frosted. Start picking the lowest sprouts first, when they are the size of a walnut, firm and still tightly closed.



Sow inside

Sow outside

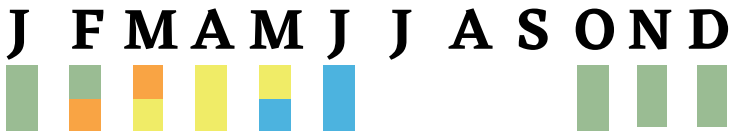


Plant out



Harvest

Celeriac



Start seeds off from February, sowing thinly in a small pot or seed tray. Place the pot or tray in a propagator or cover with a clear plastic bag and keep in a warm location. Alternatively, place in a coldframe in milder areas. As celeriac seeds are very fine, sow the seed onto the surface of moist seed sowing compost and lightly cover to its own depth, for the first few weeks water from below or finely mist the surface.

Germination of celeriac is known to be erratic and so it is worth sowing more seeds than you expect to harvest as mature plants. Once seedlings appear, grow on in a frost-free greenhouse or coldframe. Harden off before planting out 30cm apart, once any danger of frost has passed.

Outdoor sowings in April and May, should be made in shallow drills 20cm apart and thinned after germination, before planting out in June.

Celeriac is a moisture-loving plant, so keep the soil constantly damp – it should never be allowed to dry out. Cover the ground with a thick layer of mulch, such as garden compost, to hold in moisture, and keep the area weed free.

As the plants mature, remove the outer leaves when they fall horizontal, to expose the crown and allow it to develop. Remove any side-shoots if they appear.



Chilli Peppers



Sow Chilli Pepper seeds on the surface of a good, free-draining, damp, seed sowing mix and cover with a fine sprinkling of compost or vermiculite. Place seed trays in a propagator until after germination. Do not exclude light as this helps germination.

When seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant into individual 7.5cm pots of compost and grow on in cooler conditions. When plants are well grown and all risk of frost has passed, transplant into grow bags and containers, or plant in well prepared beds of fertile, moist, well drained soil.

Chilli peppers may be grown undercover in a greenhouse or polytunnel, or grown outdoors in a sheltered position in full sun. When growing chilli peppers outdoors, gradually acclimatise them to outdoor conditions over a period of 7 to 10 days prior to transplanting them. Space pepper plants at a distance of 50cm apart. Taller varieties of chilli peppers may require staking.

Water chilli pepper plants regularly throughout the growing season and feed weekly with a tomato fertiliser once the first fruits have set.



Height: to 75cm
Spread: to 50cm
Half hardy annual
Full sun / greenhouse
Germination:
7 - 10 days
Harvest:
From 13 - 16 weeks



Sow inside



Sow outside



Plant out



Harvest

Chives



Sow seeds indoors in February and March 0.5cm deep, in small pots of compost, lightly covering the seed with a sprinkling of compost. Water well and place at a temperature of 15-20°C. If transplanting outside gradually harden off in a coldframe before planting out 20cm apart once they have been hardened off. Alternatively sow outdoors April to August sowing small clusters of seeds where they are to crop, 0.5cm deep, directly into finely-prepared soil.

Once the leaves reach 15cm tall, begin to harvest, picking a few leaves from each plant so they regrow quickly. Do not cut lower than 5cm above the soil. Once the plants are well established you can harvest all year round. Young plants can be sown and grown on a windowsill all year round, or you could lift and pot up a small clump in the autumn and place on the windowsill for fresh herbs throughout the winter months.

Chives prefer a fertile soil with some moisture but will grow well in dry conditions too, including gravel and rock gardens.



Height: to 30cm
Spread: to 20cm
Perennial
Full sun / semi-shade
Germination:
10 - 21 days
Harvest:
From 10 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Chrysanthemum

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



Chrysanthemums can be annual, hardy perennial or tender perennial, but we focus on the annual variety commonly referred to as “florists’ chrysanthemums” that have been bred from the Chinese and Japanese types to make excellent late season cut flowers. They come in a wonderful range of rich velvety colours, with shapes that vary from the neat pom-pom to outrageous spidery forms.

Sow seed indoors February to April 1cm deep in 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. Acclimatise to outside conditions before planting out after all risk of frost, 30cm apart. Alternatively direct sow your Chrysanthemum seeds outdoors in April or May.

We recommend choosing a sunny, sheltered spot with protection from strong winds and well-drained but fertile soil, that has had some organic matter dug in. Protect the plants from wind by staking each plant with canes. Water regularly throughout the summer and give them a balanced liquid feed every two weeks from midsummer until the buds start to appear. Chrysanthemums are late to flower, so be patient, don’t give them too much nitrogen rich food, a well-balanced feed and lots of sun is what they need.



Height: to 100cm
Spread: to 40cm
Half Hardy Annual
Full Sun | Semi Shade
Germination:
14 - 28 days



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

Craspedia

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



As well as being a favourite among florists, Craspedia is also becoming increasingly well known as a garden plant. It bears dense, yellow, spherical flowerheads, at the top of stiff stems emerging from basal rosettes of narrow foliage. There are several species available, though *Craspedia globosa* is the most widely cultivated. Craspedia is also known by the names of bachelor's buttons or Billy buttons.

Sow seed indoors January to April 1cm deep in 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. Acclimatise to outside conditions before planting out after all risk of frost, 30cm apart. Once the time comes for an outdoor move, craspedia is perfect for the front to middle of a sunny, well-draining border. It also makes an excellent container plant. Wherever you plant it, remember this plant hails from the mountains of the southern hemisphere, so give it as much sun and drainage as you can!

If you intend to treat your craspedia as an annual, there is no pruning required. Simply remove the plant at the end of the growing season and discard onto the compost heap. If you did want to try to overwinter it, simply cut back after flowering and move to a frost-free environment (container-grown) or place a cloche over the plant.



Height: to 100cm

Spread: to 44cm

Perennial

Full Sun | well drained

Germination:

14 - 28 days



Sow inside



Sow outside



Plant out



Harvest



Flower

Dahlia



The real advantage in growing Dahlias from seed is that you get the best of both worlds. The first year will provide a very economical collection of bright flowers and each plant will produce tubers that can be carefully lifted at the end of the season for storing and re-planting the following year. With single flowers, cactus types, pompons, waterlilly, anemone and collarette types there's a Dahlia out there to suit ever garden and gardener!





Sow Dahlia seed in February and March in trays or pots of good quality seed compost at a depth of 2mm and in a propagator or polythene bag, keeping the compost damp but not wet until germination. Transplant seedlings into 7.5cm pots when large enough to handle taking care not to damage the roots. gradually harden off before planting out in the flowering site from late May onwards. Space plants 60cm apart. Dahlias prefer a moist, well drained soil in full sun. Reducing the amount of flower buds per stem will increase the size and quality of the blooms produced. Deadheading regularly will also promote new blooms and prolong the season.

Whilst Dahlias are a half-hardy perennial, they are largely treated as a half-hardy annual when grown from seed. However, if you have enjoyed the flowers and have a dry frost free place it is always worth trying to lift and store the tubers for replanting the next year. If doing so, check on them regularly for rot, and plant healthy tubers into pots in a greenhouse in April, or plant directly outside once all risk of frost has passed. Tubers should be lifted and stored each year.



Height: to 120cm
Spread: to 45cm
Half-hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
7 - 21 days



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Flower

Fenugreek

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



Fenugreek is also known as Methi, which is how many of us will have seen it on the menus of our favourite Indian takeaways. With its spicy, peppery aroma and a sweet and sour taste fenugreek has a distinctive flavour that is delicious in all sorts of dishes, the seeds are also used as a spice for cooking with. Fenugreek blends amazingly with cumin and coriander.

Sow seed indoors October to March 1cm deep in 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. Fenugreek should be sown in it's final position as does not transplant well, a 9cm plant pot or shallow container is suitable. Alternatively direct sow your Fenugreek seeds outdoors in April or May.

Once established, thin seedlings to 5cm apart. Water your crop regularly to keep it moist, particularly in dry weather. Pinch off the top third of mature stems periodically to encourage lush, branching growth. This fast-growing annual will produce leaves that are ready to harvest within just 20-30 days of sowing. Trim the leaves carefully, snipping the top third of mature stems, and allowing the rest to continue growing. This also encourages branching, which will increase flowering and seed production later on. If you're not planning to collect the seeds, regular harvesting also delays it from setting seed.



Height: to 50cm
Spread: to 30cm
Hardy Annual
Full Sun | Semi Shade
Germination:
5 - 21 days
Harvest: from 4 weeks



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

Gaura

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



It's easy to see why *Gaura lindheimeri* holds an RHS Award of Garden Merit. With its slender, arching stems tipped with panicles of rosy pink buds opening to reveal white flowers, this plant blooms over an incredibly long period. The delicate flowers attract pollinating insects to the garden and bring movement to borders with its loose, wafty habit. Gauras are easy as long as you remember that they are prairie plants from a warm place, mulching helps to protect from severe winters. Mature gauras do not move well.

Sow seed indoors February to April on the surface of a 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 moist, but not wet, at all times, water lightly as seedlings emerge. Transplant seedlings when large enough to handle into 9cm pots and continue to grow on indoors in cooler conditions. Acclimatise to outside conditions before planting out after all risk of frost, 30cm apart.

Grow *Gaura* plants in a sunny position on moist, well drained soil. Although Gauras prefer full sun and a moist soil, they will also tolerate partial shade and drought once established. Feed and water regularly throughout the growing season until *Gaura* plants are fully established. In autumn, cut back faded *Gaura* flower stems and apply a mulch of well rotted manure to the base of the plant. Divide clumps of overcrowded plants in spring.



Height: to 120cm
 Spread: to 60cm
 Hardy Perennial
 Full Sun
 Germination:
 5 - 21 days

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

Gazania



Gazania, also known as treasure flowers for their jewel bright blooms, are fantastic for bringing colour to patios and sunny borders. Grown as annuals their daisy-type flowers love sunshine and if they don't get enough of it, will close up. The blooms come in shades of rose, red, pink, bronze, gold and orange and are set off by the cool green foliage.

Sow indoors from January to April in pots or trays of moist seed compost and lightly cover with a fine sprinkling of vermiculite to a maximum depth of 3mm. Place in a propagator or seal inside a polythene bag until germination occurs. Put in a warm place and keep the surface of the compost moist but not waterlogged.

When large enough to handle, transplant seedlings into 7.5cm pots or trays. Gradually acclimatise young plants to outdoor conditions for 10-14 days before planting out after all risk of frost, 30cm apart or plant into baskets and containers of good multi-purpose compost.

Feed and water until the plants are fully established, or if in a container water regularly as needed. Regular deadheading of faded flowers will encourage more blooms to be produced.



Height: to 30cm
Spread: to 15cm
Half-hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
14 - 30 days



Sow inside



Sow outside



Plant out



Flower

Goji Berry

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

Year 1



Year 2



Year 3



Goji berries are not generally difficult to grow. They tolerate light shade, but when grown in full sun they give their best crop. They are hardy and, once established, will tolerate wind, salt-laden air (such as coastal gardens) and drought.

The seeds are best soaked in cold water for 24 hours before sowing them. Sow them indoors, on a windowsill is best, between January and April. Start them either in modules or 9cm pots, sowing the seeds individually 1cm deep. Place in a propagator or seal container inside a polythene bag until after germination. Keep compost moist, but not wet, at all times, water lightly as seedlings emerge. If sown in individual modules, your seedlings should be ready to transplant after about 8 week. Transplant into 9cm pots and continue to grow on indoors in cooler conditions, perhaps moving them to a greenhouse or zippy. Continue to care for the seedling, keeping a eye out for roots emerging from the bottom of the pot, this is a sign to move it into a bigger one. Over its first summer the plant will benefit from being outside, but not planted in the ground as once the frosts begin you will need to move the young plant back inside (greenhouse or zippy). In spring of year 2 plant the Goji Berry outside in free-draining soil that has been enriched with well-rotted manure or in a larger container with good drainage holes, and use a good quality potting compost with added grit or sharp sand. Apply a liquid fertiliser (such as tomato feed) fortnightly during the growing season.

Plants begin to fruit in years 2 or 3. Harvest berries from late summer until the first frosts. Only fully ripe fruit are edible. Fruit can turn black when handled so consider harvesting by shaking the berries gently from the plant onto a sheet placed beneath.



Height: to 300cm

Spread: to 400cm

Hardy Perennial

Full Sun

Germination:

14- 21 days

Harvest: from Year 2



Sow inside



Sow outside



Plant out



Harvest



Flower

Lentils



Most lentils can be grown in two ways.

First of all as a micro green: Simply scatter the seed on the surface of a shallow seed tray at anytime of year, keep moist and harvest when the sprouts reach 2/3 inches, which can be as little as 4-7 days.

Secondly, as a full plant, harvesting the lentils as you would with peas once ready. But be warned, with just 2/3 lentils per pod, you're in for a lengthy harvesting process, but I know some of you will be up for this as a novelty.

Sow under cover in late winter or outside from mid-spring. If sowing undercover, sow lentils in modular trays 2-3cm deep, with two to three seeds per module. Grow on in warmth and harden off before planting outside after all risk of frost has passed. If sowing direct outside, sow seeds 2-3cm deep in rows 30cm apart.

Lentil plants have a sprawling habit and can reach heights of 40-50cm. If lack of space means it is necessary to restrict growth, stake the young plants with twiggy pea sticks or canes and string, so the growth develops in a more upright manner.

Lentils are reasonably quick to grow outside and produce their first pods approximately three months after sowing. Water the plants well during dry spells and harvest when the pods turn brown.



Height: to 50cm

Spread: to 20cm

Tender annual

Full Sun

Germination:

5 - 21 days



Sow inside



Sow outside



Plant out



Harvest



Flower

Mimulus



The Mimulus is known for having unusual monkey-like snapdragon flowers. Typically, the Mimulus grows in a woodland environment, and can often be seen beside woodland streams. Trailing varieties of mimulus will turn any hanging basket into a profusion of cascading flowers. They will grow freely in spring and when grown in a flower bed it will produce a mound of flowers throughout the summer. Often named monkeyflower after the apparent resemblance the blooms have to a monkey's face.

Sow February to May on the surface of a good free draining, damp seed compost. Do not cover the seed. Place in a propagator or seal container inside a polythene bag until after germination. Do not exclude light at any stage, as this helps germination.

Transplant seedlings, when large enough to handle, into trays or 7.5cm pots. Grow on in cooler conditions for 10-15 days before planting out after all risk of frost, 30cm apart. After flowering, trim plants lightly to encourage a second flush of blooms.

A tender perennial, Mimulus is hardy down to -4°C . Cut back plants after flowering and divide congested clumps in spring or autumn.



Height: to 90cm
Spread: to 30cm
Tender perennial
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
10 - 21 days



Sow inside



Sow outside



Plant out



Flower

Onion



Although usually grown from sets, onions can be grown from seed, sown either indoors or outside. Seed is cheaper to buy, but slower to grow and the seedlings need more careful attention, however seed-grown plants can be less susceptible to bolting (flowering). To ensure a good crop, seed-raised plants must be growing strongly by late spring, as the lengthening days trigger the formation of bulbs – the more leaves plants have at this time, the better the bulb will be.

Early sowings (December to March) can be made indoors in pots or seed trays, sow seed on the surface of seed sowing compost and lightly cover with a sprinkling or vermiculite or compost and place in a propagator or polythene bag until germination. Indoor sown seedlings can be pricked out into individual pots before moving to a cold frame in April to harden off before planting outside 15cm apart.

Outdoor sowings can be made in April, sow seed thinly in shallow drills 1.5cm deep, with rows spaced 30cm apart. Outdoor sowings can be thinned gradually until plants are 15cm apart, then leave to mature as smaller bulbs for storing. Pull the thinning's carefully and remove from the site to avoid attracting onion fly. Thinning's can be used as salad onions.

Water in prolonged dry spells every 14 days, and give an occasional feed with a general liquid fertiliser. But stop watering and feeding once the onions have swollen in mid-summer. Watering spring-planted crops after mid-summer can mean they store less successfully. Try to avoid overhead watering, as this can encourage fungal diseases.

Yellowing and toppling of the foliage is a sign that the crop is reaching maturity. Harvest before the foliage dies down completely. Carefully lift the bulbs with fork, taking care not to damage or bruise them, as this could cause them to rot in storage. Use any damaged onions straight away.



Height: to 50cm
 Spread: to 10cm
 Hardy annual
 Hardy annual
 Germination:
 14 - 21 days
 Harvest:
 From 12 weeks



- Sow inside
- Sow outside
- Plant out
- Harvest

Parsnip

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



Direct sow parsnip seeds outdoors from March and April to produce quality roots with less risk of canker disease. Avoid sowing in cold or wet soils. Sow parsnip seeds thinly at a depth of 2cm in drills 30cm apart. Germination is slow and may take up to 28 days, or longer. When large enough to handle, thin out the seedlings within each row to 7cm apart or 10cm apart if larger roots are preferred.

Parsnips can be started in modules in a greenhouse in February. However, they are susceptible to transplant shock. Even the smallest amount of root disturbance needs to be avoided, which is why most gardeners choose to direct sow their parsnip seeds. Toilet roll tubes are great for avoiding transplant shock as you can plant them and they will decompose .

Grow parsnips in a sunny position in stone-free, well prepared soil that has been deeply cultivated. Parsnips prefer a fertile, light, well drained soil, which has been manured for a previous crop.

Although parsnips mature in around four months or 100 to 120 days, many gardeners leave them in the ground over winter. Parsnip harvesting occurs when the roots reach their full size and have been frosted which helps developed their distinctive sweet taste. Use a garden fork to gently ease them from the ground.



Height: to 25cm
Spread: to 30cm
Hardy biennial
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
from 28 days
Harvest:
from 22 weeks



- | | |
|---|-------------|
|  | Sow inside |
|  | Sow outside |
|  | Plant out |
|  | Harvest |

Summer Cabbage



Sow summer cabbage seed indoors from October to February for an early harvest. Sow seeds at a depth of 1cm in trays of free-draining, compost and cover with a layer of vermiculite. Place in a propagator or seal container inside a plastic bag until germination. Once germinated, grow Cabbage plants on in cooler conditions until all risk of frost has passed and plants are large enough to be transplanted with 2-3 true leaves.

Direct sow outdoors from late March to May into a well prepared seedbed, for transplanting to their final positions later on. Sow at a depth of 20mm and distance of 25cm between rows.

Gradually acclimatise them to outdoor conditions before planting out. Vivaldi is an ideal variety for small 750g-1kg heads from 45cm spacings or if spaced at 30cm x 30cm baby heads of 250-500g can be produced. For other varieties, space a minimum of 50cm apart to ensure space for growth.

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 should be ready to harvest after around 20 weeks, use a sharp knife to cut the cabbage from the stalk.



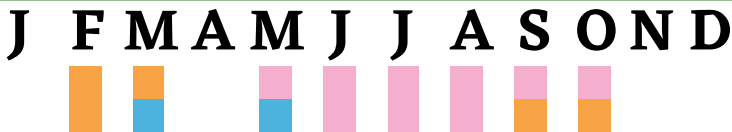
Height: to 60cm
Spread: to 45cm
Half hardy annual
Full Sun
Germination:
12 - 24 days
Harvest:

From 18 weeks (from
spring sowings)



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Summer Pansy



Pansies are short-lived perennials, popular for using in colourful pot and border displays. Their colourful flowers are often prettily marked in the centre and look like faces – sometimes with darker blotches, or ‘whiskered’, or plain. An enormous range of flower colours and variations includes blue, mauve, pink, purple, red, yellow, and white, they’re often bicoloured with a mixture of shades too. Pansies flower all year round but are particularly useful in winter, when little else is in bloom (see Winter Pansy for relevant growing information for these types).

Sow on the surface of lightly firmed, moist seed compost in pots or trays. Cover with a very fine sprinkling of compost or vermiculite. Do not exclude light as this helps germination. Too high a temperature can prevent germination.





When seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant into pots or trays. Gradually acclimatise plants to cooler conditions for a few weeks before planting out after all risk of frost, 20cm apart, or plant into containers.

Overwinter September and October sowings in a cold frame then plant out the following spring. Regular removal of dead heads encourages new flowers to ensure a continuous display.



Height: to 15cm
Spread: to 20cm
Hardy perennial
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
14-21 days



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Flower

Summer Sprouting Broccoli



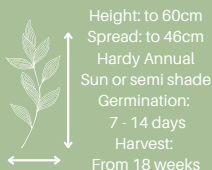
Summer Sprouting Broccoli is specifically bred for summer cropping tolerating summer heat with no need for a winter chill to produce excellent crops. With this variety you'll get tender purple spears from summer through to the first frosts.

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.

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.



Summer Cauliflower



Sow seed indoors from February and March for an early harvest. Sow seeds at a depth of 1cm in trays of free-draining, compost and cover with a layer of vermiculite. Place in a propagator or seal container inside a plastic bag until germination. Once germinated, grow Cauliflower plants on in cooler conditions until all risk of frost has passed and plants are large enough to be transplanted with 2-3 true leaves.

Direct sow outdoors in April and May into a well prepared seedbed, for transplanting to their final positions later on. Sow at a depth of 1cm and distance of 25cm between rows. Outdoor sowings should be thinned to 7-10cm apart and once plants are 15cm tall, they can be lifted and transplanted to their final planting positions.

Gradually acclimatise them to outdoor conditions before planting out. Gradually harden off before planting out, spacing plants 45cm apart between plants and 60cm between the rows for large curds.

Cover with a protective netting or fleece to prevent attack from birds and insects. Water the plants thoroughly after planting. Feed with a nitrogen-rich liquid food every fortnight.

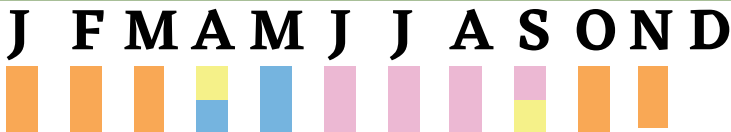


Height: to 60cm
Spread: to 45cm
Hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
7 - 12 days
Harvest:
From 18 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Sweet Pea



Sweet Pea seeds can be sown outdoors in September and April in their intended flowering site 2cm deep. Pinch out the growing points of each stem once the second pair of leaves has opened to encourage bushier growth.

In October and November and January through to March Later sow Sweet Peas in 9cm pots, with 5 seeds in each. Place in a propagator or seal container inside a plastic bag germination. Once germinated, grow sweet peas on in cooler conditions, before transferring to a cold frame for overwintering. Pinch out the growing points of each stem once the second pair of leaves has opened to encourage bushier growth.

In spring, plant out sweet peas at a distance of 25cm apart in any well drained garden soil in full sun. Train the stems onto a suitable support such as trellis or a free standing climbing frame.

Feed and water sweet peas regularly throughout the growing season. When growing sweet peas it is essential to cut the flower stems frequently and deadhead faded blooms to prevent seedpods developing. This will encourage more blooms to be produced and extend the flowering period throughout summer.

Caution: Sweet Pea seeds are harmful if eaten.



Height: to 180cm
Spread: to 30cm
Half-hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
10 - 21 days



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

Tomato



Sow seeds February to April on the surface of a good, free-draining, damp, seed sowing mix and cover with a fine sprinkling of compost or vermiculite. Place seed trays in a propagator until after germination. When seedlings gain 2 true leaves, transplant into individual 7.5cm pots, and grow on.

In a greenhouse tomato plants may be transplanted at the end of May or when the first flowers are showing, if earlier. Allow 3 plants per growbag, or one per 25cm pot, or plant directly into the greenhouse soil.

When growing tomatoes outdoors, wait until all risk of frost has passed before transplanting. Gradually acclimatise to outdoor conditions before planting out from early June when plants are at least 20cm tall. Choose a sheltered position in full sun on fertile, reliably moist, well drained soil, and transplant at a distance of 60cm apart.

For cordon varieties put a cane into the soil next to each plant to support them as they grow, and tie each main stem to its support with soft garden twine. From late June cut back the leaves by half to allow air to circulate and light to access the fruits, helping avoid blight and promote ripening. Incorporate a weekly feed into your watering schedule once the first truss has set.



Height: to 150cm
Spread: to 50cm
Half hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
5 - 10 days
Harvest:
From 10 weeks



Orange	Sow inside
Yellow	Sow outside
Blue	Plant out
Green	Harvest

Venidium



If you love sunflowers, but want something a bit more delicate but packs with flowerheads, Venidium is the flower you've been searching for.

Sow indoors between February and April in individual 9cm pots. Sow 2 seeds per pot, 1cm deep in compost. Discard the weakest seedling after germination. Grow on until the risk of frost has passed, gradually acclimatising the plants before planting out.

Alternatively from April to June sow seeds thinly, 1cm deep in drills 30cm apart in well cultivated soil raked to a fine tilth. When large enough to handle, thin seedlings to 30cm apart.

Venidium are a low maintenance plant, once in a sunny spot, avoid overwatering, and enjoy its vibrant show throughout the season.

Venidium give multiple flowerheads, so deadhead regularly to encourage continuous flowering. If space allows once the flowers are spent at the end of the season leave the heads to form seeds which will provide food for wildlife through the winter.



Height: from 60cm
Spread: to 40cm
Half hardy annual
sun or semi shade
Germination:
14 - 21 days

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

My Gardening Notes

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Echinacea



Echinacea is an easy to grow, tough perennial which flowers in late summer. They combine well with other late perennials and grasses, especially in prairie-style plantings. The flowers are attractive to bees and butterflies. Echinacea won't flower freely in shade. They prefer being planted in spring and summer, as autumn plantings are more prone to rotting off over winter, especially on wet or heavy soils. They also dislike being disturbed, so plants are best allowed to form large clumps.

Whether you are sowing Echinacea indoors in Autumn or Spring, simply scatter the seeds on the surface of your compost and lightly cover with vermiculite or grit. These seeds do not require additional heat to germinate. Keep the compost moist and once the seedlings have a pair of true leaves and are large enough to handle, pot on into 9cm pots. For autumn sown seedlings protect them from the worst of the frosts between December and February, planting them out in March, plant out spring sown seedlings in May after hardening them off.

Once your Echinacea plants have matured, you can harvest the flowers and leaves for various purposes. The flowers can be dried and used to make herbal teas, tinctures, or infused oils with potent immune-boosting properties. The leaves can also be harvested and used in similar preparations.



Height: 100cm
Spread: to 40cm
Hardy Perennial
Full Sun
Germination:
10 - 14 days

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

Geranium



Ever wonder about the difference between geraniums and pelargoniums? For years there has been considerable confusion over what a geranium really is. The annual 'geranium' (pelargonium) is often referred to as a geranium. While geraniums and pelargoniums are related, both being members of the Geraniaceae family, there are various distinct differences between the two in, growth, appearance, and seed dispersal technique. The seeds we sell are strictly Pelargoniums, but like many gardeners we were brought up with their misclassification and so we call them Geraniums.

Sow between December and March in pots or trays of moist seed compost and cover with a very fine sprinkling of compost or vermiculite. Place in a propagator or warm place, do not exclude light as this helps germination. Keep the surface of the compost moist but not waterlogged.




When large enough to handle, transplant seedlings into 7.5cm pots or trays. Gradually acclimatise to outdoor conditions for 10-15 days before planting out after all risk of frost, 30cm apart.

An ideal plant for borders and containers alike. Although technically perennial, Pelargoniums are only half hardy and therefore normally treated as annuals in the UK. However, with care, they may be overwintered in a frost free greenhouse.



Height: to 40cm
Spread: to 35cm
Half-hardy perennial
Full sun
Germination:
3 - 21 days



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Flower

Antirrhinum

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



You can sow antirrhinum (Snapdragon) seed under cover either in spring or autumn, from February to April or in September and October. Or direct sow the seeds outside from April to July. Sprinkle snapdragon seeds on the surface of good quality seed compost the soil. The seeds are tiny, so don't cover them as they need light to germinate. It is recommended you moisten the compost or soil before sowing the seeds and once sown keep the compost moist but not wet using a mister to avoid washing the seeds through the compost. Once sown, place indoor seeds under a propagator cover or in clear plastic bag until they have germinated. Prick out seedlings when they are large enough to handle into modules or 9cm pots and grow them on until they are sturdy plants. They can be planted out into well prepared beds once the danger of frost has passed. Plant out Autumn sown seedlings in a very spot in warmer areas or put in a cold frame to overwinter and give you flowers as early as the following May.

If growing Snapdragons in pots, use as large a container as possible, place the container in a sunny sheltered position where they will not be damaged by the wind. As many varieties of Snapdragon are particularly tall plants, they will need staking.

To encourage the plant to bush out some gardeners will pinch it as a seedling, however cutting them for flower arrangements will have the same effect. Keep picking flower stems (not to the ground but to above a pair of leaves), and they will keep flowering for months at a time.



Height: to 120cm

Spread: to 60cm

Half-hardy annual

Full Sun

Germination:

10 - 21 days

Vase life: 7 - 10 days



Sow inside



Sow outside



Plant out



Flower