



Making The Most Of Every Season

The Winter Collections 2023/24: 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 Collection's Pocket Companion you'll find information covering all the different seeds sent out across the 6 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.

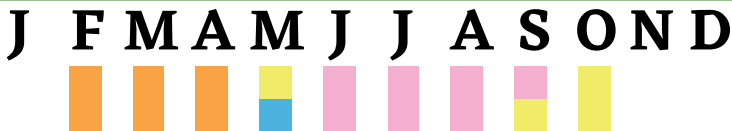
'thin out seedlings': careful removal of seedlings that are growing too close together. Water the row of seedlings well and then pull out the excess seedlings, leaving a row of single healthy seedlings at the correct spacing from one another.

'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.

Alyssum



Sow alyssum seeds indoors from late February to April, on the surface of a good quality seed compost and gently firm down. 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 alyssum plants are well grown and all risk of frost has passed, acclimatise them to outdoor conditions over 7 to 10 days. Transplant outdoors in full sun on light sandy, well drained soil at a distance of 30cm apart.

Alternatively, sow Alyssum seed outdoors in May, in shallow rows directly into well prepared seed beds. When seedlings are about 2cm tall, thin outside sowings to 10cm apart. About 3 weeks later, thin again to 30cm apart.

As a hardy annual, Alyssum can be sown outdoors in the autumn, September and October, as above, rewarding you with bigger, stronger plants than if you sow in Spring. Thin autumn sown seeds in October or early November before they cease growth for the winter.

Water regularly until plants become fully established. Cut back after the first flush of bloom to encourage more alyssum flowers to be produced.

Alyssum is edible, the leaves and flowers of sweet alyssum have a pungent flavour, similar to kale. Try adding them to salads, cold soups or even omelettes.



Height: to 15cm
Spread: to 25cm
Hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
7 - 31 days



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

Aubergine



Sow aubergine seeds from February to May for indoor cultivation or March to April for growing outdoors. Soaking seeds in warm water for 24 hours before sowing will assist germination. Sow seeds on the surface of a free draining, moist seed compost and cover with 5mm layer of vermiculite or compost. Place in a propagator or seal the container inside a polythene bag until after germination. Ensure the compost remains moist whilst waiting for germination. When the seedlings are large enough to handle, carefully transplant them into 7.5cm pots and grow on at a lower temperature.

When all risk of frost is passed and the soil is warm, harden off and plant aubergines in their final positions. For indoor cultivation, pot on into larger containers or plant 2 aubergines per growbag.

Outdoors, plant aubergines in rich fertile soil at a distance of 90cm apart, in rows spaced 90 - 120cm apart. Grow aubergines in a sheltered position in full sun.

When flowers appear on the plant, lightly mist with water to aid pollination and include a weekly feed into your watering schedule.



Height: to 75cm
Spread: to 60cm
Half-hardy annual
Greenhouse or full sun
Germination:
14 - 21 days
Harvest:
from 16 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Asparagus

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



Asparagus is often grown from crowns, but can also be grown from seed. These plants take one year longer to grow and establish before you can start harvesting.

Sow seeds singly into small individual modules or pots filled with seed compost, in February. Harden them off and transplant into their final positions in early June. Prepare the planting site by weeding thoroughly, then dig in at least one bucketful of organic matter, such as garden compost. Alternatively, sow outside in March or April, in drills 2.5cm deep and 30–45cm apart. Thin the seedlings to 15cm apart and protect from slugs and snails. Transplant them to their final positions the following March.

Keep the asparagus bed weed-free, as asparagus plants grow better without competition from weeds. Weed by hand rather than with a hoe, as the shallow roots are easily damaged. In early spring (years 2, 3 and beyond), apply 100g per sq metre of general fertiliser or blood, fish and bone. If growth is weak, repeat once harvesting has finished. In autumn, allow the foliage to turn yellow before cutting it down to soil level.

Resist the temptation to harvest newly planted asparagus for the first two years, to let plants get well established. In the third year, harvest spears from mid-April for six weeks. In subsequent years, you can harvest for eight weeks from mid-April. To harvest, cut individual spears with a sharp knife 2.5cm below the soil surface when they are no more than 18cm tall. In warm weather, harvest every two to three days for the best quality spears.



Broad Bean

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

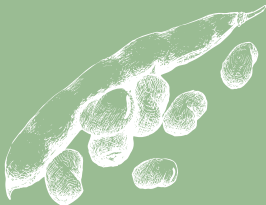
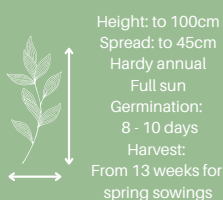


Sown Broad Beans in late winter (indoors or outdoors with the protection of a cloche or similar) or spring (outdoors), although in mild regions they can also be sown in late autumn. Plants grown indoors should be hardened off before planting out.

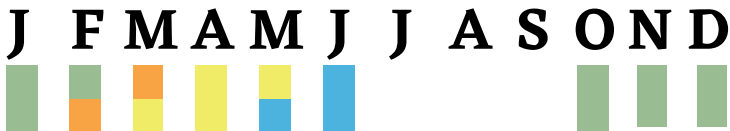
Grow beans in full sun on rich fertile, well manured soil with protection from strong winds. Plant broad beans in double rows set 25cm apart and allowing at least 60cm between each double row. Sow broad beans at a depth of 5cm deep and a distance of 25cm apart within each row and water well. When sown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



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

Cucumber



Sow Cucumber seeds from March to May for indoor cropping and for transplanting later on. Sow 2 cucumber seeds on their sides at a depth of 1cm in a 7.5cm pots of free-draining, seed sowing compost. Place in a propagator or seal container inside a plastic bag until germination. Protect the emerging seedlings from direct sunlight to avoid scorching. Prior to transplanting, discard the weaker of the 2 seedlings. Grow Cucumber plants on until they are large enough to be transplanted. Keep the compost moist. When cucumber plants are well grown, transplant them at a spacing of 2 plants per growbag or 45cm apart in a warm, humid greenhouse.

Outdoor varieties may also be direct sown outdoors from May to early June. These should be gradually acclimatised to outdoor conditions before transplanting into warm, well drained, humus rich soil in full sun, with shelter from winds. Plant outdoor cucumbers in single rows at a distance of 90cm apart. Water well after planting until cucumber plants are fully established. Ensure cucumber plants are supported with trellis or canes as they grow.

Unlike some fruits, cucumbers do not continue to develop after harvest. Ripe cucumbers have a firm, green flesh with the "burpless" varieties best harvested at 2.5-4 cm in diameter. Cut the stem 5mm above the fruit.



Height: to 200cm
Spread: to 40cm
Half-hardy annual
Full sun or greenhouse
Germination:
5-10 days
Harvest:
From 10 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

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

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

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

Lavender



Growing lavender plants from seed can be a rewarding and fun way to add this fragrant herb to your garden. Lavender seeds are slow to germinate and plants grown from them may not flower in the first year, but if you're patient and willing to put in the work, you can generate beautiful plants from seeds.

Sow Lavender seeds from February to June and September to November on the surface of moist seed compost and cover seeds with a sprinkling of vermiculite or finely sieved compost. 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 as this helps germination.

When seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant into 7.5cm pots and grow lavender plants on in cooler conditions. When all risk of frost has passed, gradually acclimatise to outdoor conditions over 7 - 10 days before planting outdoors in full sun, in well drained soil.

Your first year of growth will not be impressive, but by year two, expect to have large, blooming lavender. Starting lavender plants from seed is not difficult, but does require time, some patience,



Height: to 90cm
Spread: to 90cm
Half-hardy shrub
Full sun
Germination:
30 - 90 days



Lemon Balm

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



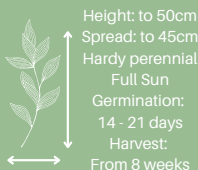
A bushy herb that resembles mint in appearance, with an invigorating lemon scent when the leaves are crushed. The aromatic foliage can be used to make refreshing lemon balm tea or added to soups and oils for a tangy lemon flavour. Lemon balm flowers are particularly attractive to bees giving rise to its other name, bee balm.

Sow lemon balm indoors from late March to April on the surface of a good seed compost and cover with a sprinkling of compost or vermiculite. Place the seed tray in a propagator or seal it inside a polythene bag. Keep the compost slightly dry at all times. Do not exclude light as this aids germination.

When seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant and grow them on in cooler conditions until large enough to plant outdoors. When plants are well grown and all risk of frost has passed, acclimatise them to outdoor conditions over 7 to 10 days. Transplant outdoors in full sun on any moist, well drained soil at a distance of 30cm. Lemon balm plants will tolerate poor soils. This herb is vigorous, but growing lemon balm in containers will help to restrict its growth.

Sow outdoor in May in drills keeping watered if dry. Germination may be erratic. Thin out or transplant when large enough to handle. Grow in good soil, preferably in a sunny position.

Harvest fresh leaves for drying at any time. Pick young leaves before the sun gets too hot. Lemon balm can be used to make a simple salad dressing for fresh spring greens. Mix 12 lemon balm leaves with 1/3 of a cup of olive oil, 3 tbsp of rice wine vinegar and salt & pepper.



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.



Lupin



Lupins are a true cottage garden flower. There is little to rival a mass planting of lupins with their tall spikes glowing with colour in May, June and July. Growing Lupins from seed is a much more cost-effective way to grow these stunning flowers, when compared to buying them as established plants!

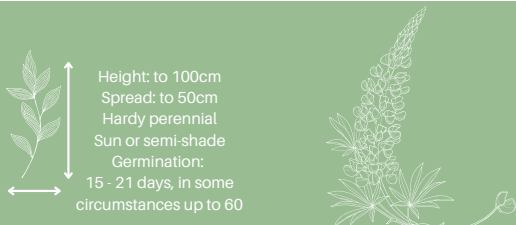
Sow Lupin seeds from February to April on the surface of a good quality, free draining compost and lightly cover with a fine sprinkling of compost or vermiculite. Place the seed tray in a propagator seal inside a clear polythene bag until the first seedlings show. Don't exclude light as this helps germination. Keep the compost damp but not wet. In some conditions, Lupins can take up to 60 days to germinate.

When seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant into 7.5cm pots and grow Lupin plants on in cooler conditions. When all risk of frost has passed, gradually acclimatise to outdoor conditions over 7 - 10 days before planting outdoors. Plant Lupins at a distance of 40cm apart on any well-drained soil in a sunny or semi shaded position. Feed and water regularly until plants are fully established.


To get a head start on the next growing year, you can also sow Lupins as above in September, and overwinter them in a cold frame and plant out the following spring.

Like many other perennials with tall flowers, lupins benefit from a sheltered position. Grow them towards the back of a border. Avoid planting them in containers as they grow weakly and can be susceptible to aphid attacks – they grow much better in the ground.

Deadhead lupins once flowers have faded and you should be rewarded with a second flush of flowers. In autumn, cut lupins right back to the ground after collecting seed. Lupins do not come true to type from seed, so lupins grown from collected seed are likely to flower in a mix of colours. CAUTION: Lupin seeds are harmful if eaten.



Height: to 100cm
Spread: to 50cm
Hardy perennial
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
15 - 21 days, in some
circumstances up to 60

-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Flower

Nicotiana



The tobacco plant, *Nicotiana*, is a popular summer bedding plant, coming in a range of colours and sizes. The trumpet-like, night-scented flowers make *Nicotiana* a great choice for planting near a seating area. Perfect for growing in a mixed border or container display. *Nicotiana* are easy to grow from seed. Many varieties make excellent cut flowers.

Sow on the surface of a good free draining seed compost from late winter to early spring. Make sure the compost is moist but not wet and place in a propagator or seal in a polythene bag until after germination. Do not exclude light which is beneficial to germination.

Transplant when large enough to handle and grow on in cooler conditions. Gradually acclimatise to outdoor conditions for 10-15 days before planting out after all risk of frost 60cm apart in sun or part shade on rich well drained soil, or into a container display.



Deadhead spent blooms regularly to prolong the flowering season. Species *Nicotiana* will self-seed if allowed. If grown in milder climates as tender perennials, *Nicotiana* can be overwintered outdoors in sheltered gardens. Simply cut back in autumn and mulch around the base of the plant for the best chances of regrowth the following spring.

Caution: Irritant to skin and eyes. Harmful if eaten.



Height: to 150cm
Spread: to 30cm
Half-hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
10 - 20 days



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Flower

Onion



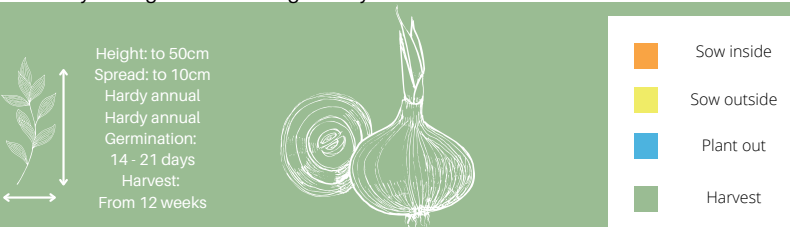
Although usually grown from sets, onions can be grown from seed, sown either indoors or outside. Seed is cheaper to buy, but slower to grow and the seedlings need more careful attention, however seed-grown plants can be less susceptible to bolting (flowering). To ensure a good crop, seed-raised plants 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.



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

Radish



Radishes grow well in most soils, but prefer rich, moist free draining soils.

Sow seeds very thinly 1cm deep in drills 15cm apart. Thin out the seedlings to 4cm as necessary. Sow at regular intervals from spring through summer in well cultivated soil. Because radishes grow so quickly, you can "inter-crop" them between slow-growing vegetables. Radishes also work well as companion plants, because they keep a lot of the bugs away from plants. Plant them alongside carrots, parsnips, and cabbages.

Keep the radish beds moist, but not soaked. Watering radishes frequently and evenly will result in quick growth; if radishes grow too slowly, they will develop a hot, woody taste

Radishes are typically ready to harvest when their roots are about 2.5cm in diameter. To harvest, lift the entire plant out of the ground using a small trowel.

Unlike many root vegetables, radishes cannot be left in the ground, as doing so will cause them to become tough and woody.



Height: to 15cm
Spread: to 10cm
Hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
5 - 10 days
Harvest:
from 4 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

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

Salvia splendens



Salvia is the largest genus of plants in the sage family Lamiaceae, with nearly 1000 species of shrubs, herbaceous perennials, and annuals. One of several genera commonly referred to as sage, it includes two widely used herbs, *Salvia officinalis* and *Salvia rosmarinus* as well as *Salvia amstad*, the particularly floriferous variety, bearing unusually large, deep purple flowers with almost-black calyces and stems and *Salvia splendens*, featured here, an upright perennial usually grown as an annual, with oval leaves and dense spikes of tubular scarlet flowers with large red bracts, over a long period in summer and autumn.

Sow indoors from February to April. For best results it is recommended you surface sow on a free draining compost. Seal in a polythene bag and leave in a shady spot for 24-48 hours then cover the seed lightly with compost.


When the seedlings are large enough to handle transplant, handling the seeds with care, into 7.5cm pots and grow on, taking care not to overwater. Gradually acclimatise to outdoor conditions for 10-15 days before planting out 30cm apart in a warm, sunny, well drained spot.

Salvia splendens requires little aftercare except for regular watering and an occasional feed.



Height: to 30cm
Spread: to 30cm
Half-hardy annual
Full sun
Germination:
10 - 14 days



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Flower

Savoy Cabbage



Sow Cabbage seed indoors from February to March at a depth of 10mm in trays of free-draining, seed sowing 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 June into a well prepared seedbed, for transplanting to their final positions later on. Sow at a depth of 10mm and distance of 25cm between rows.

Gradually acclimatise them to outdoor conditions planting cabbage out at a distance of 50cm apart. 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. Your cabbages should be ready to harvest after around 20 weeks, use a sharp knife to cut the cabbage from the stalk.



Height: to 45cm
Spread: to 30cm
Hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
4 - 7 days
Harvest:
From 20 weeks



Spinach



Direct sow outdoors March - May and July to October in an open sunny position. Sow seeds at 3 week intervals for continuous cropping. Sow seed thinly, 1cm deep in broad drills 30cm apart. Thin seedlings to 5cm apart when large enough to handle. Water regularly through the season.

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, particularly as Spinach tends to bolt and get bitter when temperatures rise.



Height: to 50cm
Spread: to 45cm
Hardy biennial
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
6 - 10 days
Harvest:
From 6 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

Spring Onion



Sow Spring Onion in succession for a continuous crop throughout the year. Many varieties, including those recommended and sold by Collie Flowers are good for overwintering, making a late indoor sowing in September or October for further harvest over the winter and early spring months. Spring onions will grow in most good fertile soil provided it is well drained.

Sow seeds outdoors from March to August at 3 weekly intervals. For a winter and early spring crop sow seeds indoors in September or October and over winter. Whether sowing Spring 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.

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 8 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.



-  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

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

Winter Cabbage



Sow Cabbage seed indoors from February to March at a depth of 10mm in trays of free-draining, seed sowing 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 April into a well prepared seedbed, for transplanting to their final positions later on. Sow at a depth of 10mm and distance of 25cm between rows.

Gradually acclimatise them to outdoor conditions planting cabbage out at a distance of 50cm apart. 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. Your cabbages should be ready to harvest after around 20 weeks, use a sharp knife to cut the cabbage from the stalk.



Height: to 45cm
Spread: to 30cm
Hardy annual
Sun or semi-shade
Germination:
4 - 7 days
Harvest:
From 20 weeks



-  Sow inside
-  Sow outside
-  Plant out
-  Harvest

My Gardening Notes

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Grow Your Own Christmas
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