

Grow Your Own. Spring 2014.

Cropping Notes

We can insure an all year round supply of various crops or differing crops by timing of sowings and planting, by the choice of variety, by the manipulation of plants, or by a combination of the above.

Examples

1. Timing the successional sowing of leaf salad crops.
2. Choice of early or late cultivar e.g. carrots.
3. Supplementary lighting or the use of fleece, mulch, low or high tunnels or glasshouse. Even the use of module growing can improve yield and availability.

Let us look at salads, Rocket, Leaf mixes, Lettuce, Endive, Batavia. Leaf spinach.

The sowing of rocket to get an unending supply starts with a first week February sowing on a heated bench in modules, to be planted out in the tunnel. One problem with rocket is bolting caused by lengthening days, drying out and /or high temperatures so a sowing every two weeks will give new leaves to pick. Sowing spring and autumn will give the best crop under cover, for the outside crop first sowing end April will be effective. Last sowing second week August. This date will also be advisable for winter Chinese leaves.

Sow before the equinox a slight and day length effect plant growth.

Lettuce, programme and culture as above but remember we have both short and long day types so the long day types we grow in the summer. Treat Scarola the same.

Endive is a good winter hardy leaf vegetable and in normal winters will survive outside, examples being

Indivia Scarola the best and hardy
'Cicoria Palla Rossa' Precoce' Red

Lettuce under cover

Winter types *Winter salad leaves.*

Passion Brune

Merville d'hiver

Brune d'hiver

Wiske

Winter Gem from T&M good winter crop.

Winter Cos

Chartwell

Spring onwards *Delicato,*

Ired

Red fire, Oak Leaved,

Mixed Leaves

Mazur

Rouge Genobloise

Little Gem up to July very prone to mildew under cover and outside
Doree de Printemps(Batavia)
Italian types, mainly for summer. eg *Bionda Scarola*
Some endive and chicory types sown August/September will stand the winter with a bit of protection.

Sow 8th November plant 27th December harvest 11th April protected cultivation.
Protective cultivation, 7 weeks to 22 weeks from planting to cutting dependant on season

18 weeks outside from an early February sowing.
8 weeks in June to August.

Annual Spinach the cultivar Samish F1 from Fothergills seeds we find the best to eat and have good overwintering properties. Medina for early spring

Courgettes Under cover sow 15th March in heat; plant out 15th April (cover or heat)
Otherwise, sow 15th April, in heat, plant out 15th May.
Outside sow end April cold under cover, plant out late May.
As soon as the currant plants commence cropping sow another crop.
Varieties, Jemmer F1, Zucchini. Defender

Celery as programme **do not** cover seed and germinate at 21degrees C as celery are prone to bolting. Early crops under cover. Use self-blanching types. Treat **Celeriac** the same although minimum temperature of 16 degrees C.

Grow on especially for earlier sowings at 15 degrees
6th March first sowing for an early April plant although can sow from late January if heated.

Beetroot sow from February covered, May outside to end August although later again under protection. *Red, White and Golden.*

Leeks sow 15th March, in seedbed for traditional season crop to transplant June/ July, earlier sowings heated glass January /February will give early crop harvest August /September. Varieties; *Hannibal* early, *Musselburgh* and *Giant Winter* for later hardy types to stand the winter. AYR *Nipper* from T & M

Broad beans. *Aquadulce* as the first sowing under glass in November, then early December, plant out first sowing in tunnel in last week January, to give a bean crop or an early leaf tip to eat. Continue with this variety for January sowing and then *The Sutton* from February to May. Sow at three-week intervals.

French Beans first sowing mid February under cover, and planted out under cover continue sowing at three week intervals varieties *Safari from Kings Seeds*.
From an end April sowing under glass can be planted out after last frosts.
Climbing French *Cobra* or *Hunter* sow first week March and grow on under cover for a June crop.

Sowed last crop early September and picked mid October.
Barlotta beans last sowing mid July planted undercover for a crop of either late beans or for drying.

Brassicae.

Brussels Sprouts. Sow under cover in February or direct outside in March/ April in a seedbed. Harvest time will depend on variety choice for example.

<i>Trafalgar</i>	Nov-Jan	cropping
<i>Seven Hills</i>	Feb-March	cropping

Spring Cabbage. Giving two examples *Duchy F1* sow Jan-Feb under cover in heat. For an April onwards harvest according to growing conditions the earlier crops grown under cover.

Greyhound early crops Feb-March sowing in heat under cover for a harvest June-July.

When I grew commercially we sowed in early October for planting mid December and Mid January for successional tunnel cropping to June.

Durham Early, sown mid August, suitable for cropping under protection in spring.

Purple Sprouting Broccoli. Early and late types sow May/ June in modules and plant out for March onwards picking last year we are planting under plastic to try for a very early crop. Sown 9th August. Planted 27th October.

Annual type from T&M worth trying. *Summer Purple*

Cabbages see programme and recommended in catalogue. Mainly sowing in March/ April for an autumn harvest or August sowing for February/April harvest.

Carrot. good examples of manipulation using fleece, tunnels or a combination and variety to give AYR cropping. Varieties *Early Nantes*, *Amsterdam forcing 2* sow January February under polythene or cloche, as we need a specific temperature of 8 degrees to assure good germination. Through summer sowing undercover and outside and then finish with *Autumn King* outside and again *Early Nantes*, under cover to produce an early crop sow August.

Cucumber. Easier to grow open pollinated varieties sowing mid March at 20 degrees, for tunnel production use *Telegraph Improved*. Other Eastern European cvs from *LidL*

Tomatoes. Peppers. Aubergine. Sow 8 – 10 weeks before planting. Germinating minimum temperature of 18 degree, the ideal being 21degrees. Grow on after germination at the same temperature, as they do not like draughts or cold, below are the ideal minimum temperatures.

Tomatoes, germinate at 18 degrees	grow on at 16 degrees.
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Peppers, germinate at 20 degrees	grow on at 18 degrees.
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Aubergines, germinate at 21 degrees	grow on at 18 degrees.
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They also need good light to grow.

Varieties *Beauty Bell*, *Long Red Marconi*, *Tasty Grill Red*,

Melons, Squashes need a warm summer and a sheltered site, sow April in containers and grow fast for an end of May early June Planting outside.

Onions. Can be grown from seed, sow in autumn or January February in modules to plant outside or plant sets in February. Varieties ‘Sushyu Yellow’, ‘Electric’ for this year 2011/2012 half crop planted in modules in November other outside.

Garlic. Plant in October November though to February, garlic needs a cold period to bulb so an early plant is best. Germidour and Marco

Radish and Spring Onions. can be sown weekly from February to September. For autumn or early spring under cover use Radish *Tarzan*.

Peas. sow *Early Onward* or *Meteor* under cover either in the ground or in pots, which is favoured as mice like peas to eat, for an early planting under cover to give tips to eat and a early crop. First sowing January or even earlier, for example, November.

Sow every three weeks moving onto *Kelvedon Wonder*, and *Markana*, there are many varieties, so choose a low growing one for an exposed site.

Potatoes. Specific varieties for specific times of year. For an early crop under a tunnel or in containers First early *Lady Christl*, *Rocket*, Second Early *Charlotte*, *Marfona*. March onwards, planting after chitting.

Belle de Fonteney main crop but a good salad spud.

Sweet Corn. germinate in modules two seeds per 9 cm pot sowing from Mid March to 5th May using super sweet varieties, Sow one seed in a 7 cm pot. Can be planted out late April if protected by fleece. Next sowing, early April but only plant out after the risk of frost has passed. Do not mix with others as taste can be compromised due to wind pollination. Best ‘*Sweet Nugget*’

Turnips. Sow from February to April giving cloche protection outside. Sow July/August for over-wintered hardy varieties.

Parsnips. Sow FRESH seed in March to April when soil temperature has risen to 7-8 degrees C. or in modules, sow three seeds in a 7 cm pot and thin to one, plant out carefully. ‘Gladiator F1’ is the best nowadays but the old ‘Avon Resist’ was resistant to canker.

Radish. All year round according to variety, reds in summer, black and white in winter.

Water cress. Easy to grow continually in wet soil, propagate by cuttings.