

## SOWING ONION - SEED.

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THERE is much diversity of opinion as to the best time to sow onion-seed, but I am bold enough to say it is only among men of little experience that such diversity exists. Those who have been long at the game, or who have had the advantage of a good training, work on definite fixed rules. Giant Rocca, and all similar large-growing varieties, must be sown in autumn, or they will not attain large size, and they are not worth growing unless they do that. Regarding keeping-varieties, spring sowing would be always best but for the fact that in many places mildew is very destructive, and when that disease attacks them they seldom ripen off properly, or, if they do, they are likely to be small. Experienced men who are working in such circumstances know two things which guide their action: First, it does not pay to handle a large number of small onions; secondly, autumn-sown onions seldom keep as long as spring-sown. They compromise by sowing at both times. Autumn sowing provides good-sized bulbs for early handling, and spring sowing smaller ones that keep longer. The reason why those sown in autumn are not injured by mildew is because the disease does not make its appearance till about February, and they have nearly finished growth by then. Being earlier than those sown in spring, they ripen early in March instead of late in the month.

An important fact that must not be forgotten is that all autumn-sown onions must be transplanted in spring, or a large number will run to seed. Keeping-varieties show very little tendency to bolt when they have been transplanted.

Regarding silver-skinned, my experience has been that they seldom keep long, though I have seen Silver King and Silver Glove keep well, but they came from a favoured place.

I have had considerable trouble with English seed, a very large proportion coming bull-necked. Australian seed is best for this country.

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An eighth of an acre of Buda kale at Moumahaki Experimental Farm, which last year produced feeding-material at the rate of 57 tons to the acre, was allowed to go to seed. The result was highly gratifying. Though the small birds were very troublesome, and it is estimated from close observations they took fully half the seed, the threshing produced a fine sample, representing a return equal to a local market value of £48 per acre.