

Spanish has been brought about by selection, and the Pukekohe Longkeeper is the outcome. It yields a shade less than Straw Spanish, but is of an excellent keeping quality. Various growers in the Pukekohe district have further improved the Longkeeper strain, which is now by far the most popular variety in the country. The value of this strain has been particularly marked in the South Island, where there has been a keen demand for the Longkeeper seed.

A variety popular in the South Island for sowing in the autumn and harvesting in early January is the Giant Rocca, which has large bulbs of poor keeping quality.

In Canterbury, autumn sown onions are sown in March and April, being harvested in December and January. Spring-sown onions, the main crop, are sown in August and September and are harvested in March and April. In the North Island seed is sown about five to six weeks earlier in the spring than in the South. Two types of crop are grown (a) transplants, and (b) seedlings.

Transplants

The seed is sown $\frac{3}{4}$ in. deep in rows one foot apart, at the rate of one ounce per chain, in late March and April. Each 5 lb. of seed sown in this manner will provide sufficient plants to plant out one acre. In July, or even as late as September, the plants are wheelhoed out of their beds. The plants are topped and tailed with shears for ease of handling and transplanted in rows one foot apart and spaced 3 to 4 inches in the rows. The transplanter holds a bundle of plants in one hand, and with the other presses the roots of each plant in the soil with the thumb, allowing the plants to lie over on one side. Plants may also be carried in a bag slung in front of the planter, who is then able to use both hands for planting.

The plants soon strike and in a few days are upright. Before planting, the rows are marked out by pulling a rake-like, wooden implement, with five teeth each one foot from its neighbour, over the area to be planted. Transplanting is far more common in the North than in the South Island.

Seedlings

The seedling crop is sown from July to September, the earlier date being commoner in the North Island. The rate of seeding is from 3 lb. to 5 lb. per acre and the seed is sown either by hand or with a drill in rows 12 to 15 inches apart. The rate of seeding depends on the lateness of the spring (if sowing is held up by rain it is advisable to allow a slightly heavier seeding), on the variety, and on the germination percentage of the seed. A large bulbed variety, e.g., Giant Rocca, would have a lighter seeding than a

smaller bulbed type such as Longkeeper. If the germination of the seed is less than 85 per cent. the rate of seeding should be increased. When the seed is sown the drills should be shallow.

The seedling crop is usually later than the transplant in coming to maturity, and gives a slightly lower yield, but this may be offset by the saving in labour, and the production of an onion that is a better keeper.

In a crop planted by the seedling method, there is usually no thinning, and the bulbs just push each other out of the rows. This procedure is quite satisfactory, with most of the bulbs reaching good size, while there is a good demand for the smaller sized

bulbs as picklers. If so desired, however, they can be thinned to 3 to 4 inches apart.

After-cultivation

The surface of the ground should be kept open and free from weeds. The soil may be hoed with a hand hoe, or wheel hoe, although, if the latter be used, a certain amount of hand weeding along the drills is required. Hoeing should not be too deep, just sufficiently so to cut the weeds. As the onion roots soon traverse the space between the rows it is a mistake to intercultivate deeply, and when the bulbs are well formed intercultivation ceases. As the yield of a crop depends to a large extent on the care and attention the

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