

What To Do In The Garden Next Month

Summary of Operations During February

SUCCESSIONAL SOWINGS.

Peas (dwarf), lettuce (sow in the row and thin out), turnips (Model White).

OTHER SOWINGS.

Spinach, endive (for winter use), carrots (Earlycrop, Early Shorthorn), cabbage (Flower of Spring for spring use).

CROPS IN SEASON.

(The month in brackets represents the month in which the seed may be sown).

Cucumbers (Sept.), lettuce (June), sweet corn (spring, after frost danger), tomatoes—outside grown (late Aug.—Sept.), radish (spring and summer).

Green Crops.—Peas (June, July and early spring), silver beet (early spring and early autumn), beans (late Oct. and Nov.).

Gourds.—Marrows, pumpkins and squash (Oct. and Nov., earlier in frost-free areas).

Root Crops.—Beetroot and carrots (almost all the year round), parsnips (early spring to early autumn), onions (late March-early April), salsify (early spring), turnips (except winter months).

and winter maturing crops. Tomato plants which have been properly grown will have attained a height of from 2ft. to over 3ft. according to variety, time of planting and growing conditions. If the plants have been set too close or if other crops tend to overcrowd them, adequate air circulation will be prevented, and this may be responsible for the start of trouble from blight. The danger may be minimised by the removal of leaves immediately below the bottom truss of fruit. These leaves, however, should be removed by cutting with a sharp knife, not by breaking them off. The latter method will leave a rough wound through which harmful bacteria may enter the plant. Removal of this heavy foliage will make easier spraying of the plant stem with a combination spray containing arsenate of lead. As has been previously stated complete spray coverage of the plant is the only safeguard against attacks of blight.

During February a sharp look-out should be kept for maturing fruit. As soon as the tomatoes begin to colour they should be picked. At this time of the year blackbirds and thrushes are particularly active in tomato beds, and considerable damage may be done by these birds unless the ripening fruit is removed.

Cabbage

As it is not desirable to leave unoccupied any part of the garden in

which a profitable crop may be grown, a few late, well-grown Savoy cabbage plants—Omega variety—may still be set out. Under good growing conditions, and with judicious manuring, and watering, combined with adequate protection from the usual garden pests, the plants will make good growth before the advent of cold weather which will restrict development.

Gourds

Marrows, pumpkins, etc.: Unless it is intended to store the balance of the crop remaining on the vines, the mature fruits should be removed and used as convenient. This will induce better growth of immature gourds which will ultimately be saved for storage and winter use. The tips of all the vines should be removed to prevent the plant from becoming exhausted in useless foliage production. Applications of liquid manure, preferably made from animal excreta, will at all times be beneficial to any of the gourd family. It should be applied after watering or after rain.

Potatoes

When the crop reaches maturity it is advisable to remove it as early as possible, and the tubers placed in storage. This is specially desirable in locations which may be subject to exceptionally moist conditions. Removal of the crop will serve the double purpose of preventing second growth which results in a certain amount of deterioration of the tubers, and will permit that part of the garden occupied by the crop to be turned over. Removal of matured crops is a necessary part of garden hygiene. Even if no immediate vegetable cropping on the same area is contemplated, seed of a green crop can be sown and later dug in.

Brassicas

That eternal vigilance which is reputed to be the price of liberty is also the price which, if paid, will secure the autumn and winter green vegetable crops for winter use. February, and early March are usually the worst

months for these crops. Periods of warm, dry weather induce attacks by plant pests, and make necessary the use of insecticides in either spray or dust form. Nicotine sulphate, arsenate of lead and derris used according to directions usually printed on containers will be effective in protecting the plants. Hoeing—always shallow—should be frequent to maintain a soil mulch, and assist the conservation of moisture. During dry spells of weather regular and copious supplies of water should be applied to make good the loss through transpiration.

Celery

Celery plants should receive plenty of water, and occasional applications of liquid manure. If being grown in trenches, the sides should be maintained at a height which will ensure proper blanching. Beds will require boards arranged along the sides to blanch the plants. In warm districts a late planting may still be made, which, if it does not mature as desert quality, will invariably be of value for other domestic requirements.

Swedes should be properly thinned out and kept free from seeds. Cultivation in this crop should be particularly shallow, and the top growth sprayed for aphides.

Leeks, too, will require heavy watering, but the soil must be well drained. Liquid manuring is of special value to this crop.

—D. K. PRITCHARD, Instructor in Vegetable Culture, Wellington.



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