

Guide for the Home Garden

Green Vegetables for Autumn and Winter

HOWEVER urgent the work may be at present in the vegetable garden, and there can be no denying such urgency, neglect to provide supplies for late autumn and winter use may have unpleasant consequences so far as family requirements are concerned. Demand for vegetables during the coming winter will certainly not be less than it has been for the last few years, and the chances are that more than ever may be necessary.

December is the month when, in many parts of the Dominion, the early potato crop will be dug and cleared from a part of the garden which, owing to the cultivation it will have received while the potato crop was growing, will be eminently suitable for planting out autumn and winter maturing brassicas—savoy cabbage and broccoli, as well as silver beet.

Where lettuce, spinach, and early beetroot have been grown, carrot, parsnip, and swede seed may be sown, or leek seedlings set out.

Weather conditions during December are not usually conducive to highest seed germination, and this makes necessary greater care in the preparation of the seed-bed. Close attention is also essential during the period of germination. If exposed to brilliant sunshine or hot winds for only a short period, germinating seedlings may be completely destroyed. Hence the need for protection during this critical period.

Care With Seedlings

If the seed has been sown in a box, the seedlings can be removed to a sheltered and shaded position. If the seed-bed is in the open garden, an effort should be made to afford protection to the young plants to prevent the results which may be expected from sun and wind.

Liberal quantities of water should be applied to the young seedlings; but good drainage conditions must also be provided. Where more seed has been sown than was necessary, and the seedlings appear to be crowded, there should not be any hesitation in thinning out the bed. The young plants which are removed can be transplanted and used later.

Seedlings which it is intended to transplant into the garden will be greatly benefited by weekly applications of liquid manure, which should be only half the strength of that usually applied to adult plants.

When the seedlings are being transferred to where they are to grow to maturity the ground should be properly prepared and well manured. Young cabbage and broccoli plants will establish themselves much more readily if "puddled" in and, especially during the early stages of growth, kept well watered. Weekly applications of liquid manure—after watering—should form a part of routine work. The plants will respond well to this treatment.

Summer Pest Control

One of the principal pests which attack plants of the cabbage family during the summer months is aphides.

Don'ts

DON'T leave potatoes out in the garden after they are dug. This is an invitation for the potato tuber-moth to take possession of the crop.

DON'T expect the best results from seeds if the seed-bed has not been properly prepared before sowing.

DON'T neglect spraying tomato plants with Bordeaux mixture. Remember, its application protects the plant; it does not remedy the disease.

DON'T turn the garden over in your mind. This operation requires the use of a spade.

If it is possible to save some of the soap-suds from the weekly wash, these may be applied with almost any kind of spraying apparatus. A bucket pump, if available, is excellent, as the whole plant can be properly covered with the liquid. The efficiency of the spray will be increased by the addition of nicotine sulphate, 1oz. to 4 gals. When the latter mixture is used it is best applied during the hottest part of the day.

To combat the depredations of caterpillars of the white butterfly and diamond-backed moth arsenate of lead should be used at a strength of 1½oz. to 4 gals. of water.

Carrots

Mid-December in northern districts and earlier in the month in the southern part of the North Island are the most appropriate times to sow carrot seed, in order to avoid disastrous attacks on the roots by the carrot rust-fly. In choosing the site of the seed-bed it is important that it should be as far removed as practicable from where carrots were recently grown, or where the remains of a spring crop have not yet been harvested. Close proximity to any area where celery, parsnips, or parsley may be growing is also undesirable, as the carrot rust-fly also attacks these crops.



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