

age, fruits should be cut from the plant before reaching maturity.

### **Pumpkins and Squash**

The advice about marrows is applicable to all members of the gourd family. It is suggested, however, that where possible, because of their value as a late winter vegetable, all fruits should be permitted to fully mature before harvesting. This particularly applies to long-keeping varieties.

### **Silver Beet**

February is the best month to transplant silver beet plants so that they may be fairly well grown before their development is hampered by wintry weather. While the soil in which the plants are to be grown should be fertile, inorganic nitrogenous fertilisers cannot be recommended for plants set out in February. Blood and bone manure, which is the safest fertiliser to use at this season, should be applied as a surface dressing at the rate of 2oz. per square yard of the bed. It is best worked into the top soil before setting out the plants. Over-crowding, bad practice at any time, is particularly so in autumn planting. Rows should not be spaced less than 20in. apart and the plants 10 to 12in. in the row. The variety Broad White Rib (dark curled Savoy leaf) is specially recommended.

### **Spring Cabbage**

Seed sowing of cabbage for spring cutting should not be delayed longer



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than the end of February. Flower of Spring is the main variety grown in the principal vegetable-growing areas in the South Island, and as far north as the centre of the North Island. Further north, for early spring harvesting, a variety of Henderson's Succession is more popular. As this is a drumhead type, plants should not be set as close as those of the smaller pointed head variety.

### **Rhubarb**

The stalks and leaves of spring and summer varieties of rhubarb will now have completely died down. It will be necessary to give the bed a clean-up to prevent the dormant crowns from being overgrown with weeds which, if permitted to grow, will rob the roots of much needed moisture. Moist soil is necessary for rhubarb root development. Principally during the absence of top growth, the plant food is stored in the rooting system for the next season's crop. Roots should not be transplanted at present.

Other varieties of rhubarb, such as Everbearing, Myatts Victoria, or Crimson Winter, should also be kept clear of weed growth. An application to each crown of two handfuls of blood and bone manure and the same amount of wood ashes would be beneficial. This would provide a reserve of plant food from which the roots would derive the nutrients for the following crop.

### **Carrots**

In northern districts there may still be time to sow seed of a stump-rooted carrot which will be well grown before the cold weather starts. In gardens where the carrot rust-fly is prevalent, there is little danger of the young roots being attacked. Large roots cannot be expected from such a late sowing, but they should be useable. Roots will be more acceptable if free from damage by this soil pest, which in some areas is menacing carrot production.

### **Lettuce**

Lettuce seed may now be sown to obtain plants for setting out as soon as they are fully grown. For this planting, good, rich soil is essential to encourage quick growth. Plants set out in March will develop quickly and can be used over a longer period than if sown earlier. Success is a variety recommended.

**DON'T** overlook harvesting shallots during February. The bulbs should be removed, left to dry, and then stored in a cool, dry shed.

**DON'T** continue to water onions. Abundant moisture at the roots will induce continued vegetative growth which destroys good-keeping quality.

**DON'T** let potatoes remain on the soil overnight after digging. This practice invites attack by the potato tuber-moth.