

healthy, free from disease, and have all the best characteristics of the variety to which they belong should be marked. Indiscriminate plant selection cannot be recommended. Seed is the basis of a crop, and upon it to a large extent will depend the quality of the plants produced.

Following are references to a few vegetables from which the home gardener may easily make selections of seed:—

### Beans

As the principal diseases which affect beans—halo blight, anthracnose, and common bean mosaic—in most cases are seed borne, it is important that in plant selection selected plants should be isolated as much as possible by the removal of adjoining plants which may be diseased. As disease spores can be spread by human agency, plants selected for seed production should never be handled after contact with diseased plants, unless the hands are washed in water to which some disinfectant has been added. Only the best-shaped pods should be allowed to mature on the vines for seed.

### Peas

Diseases of peas which are manifested by brown sunken spots on leaves and pods are caused by fungi which ultimately find their way to the seed. No plant showing indications of these affections should be selected for seed production. All pea seed, whether bought or produced in the home garden, should be thoroughly examined before sowing, and any showing brown or coloured spots should be burnt.

### Carrots

Seed should not be produced from carrots during the first season's growth. For seed production carrots are biennials, and only the best-shaped roots should be retained for planting the following spring. No plant which shows yellow or chlorotic foliage should be selected. Carrots are self-fertile, but often cross-pollinate; protection at the flowering stage may be advisable.

### Tomatoes

Selected fruits from specially-chosen tomato plants should be saved for seed. They should be fully ripened, and are better for seed saving if ripened on the vine. The tomatoes should be cut at right angles to the stem and the contents, including the pulp, squeezed out into an enamelled or earthenware container. If this is kept in the usual house temperature for 48 to 72 hours and stirred frequently with a small piece of wood, the pulp should separate from the seed. The pulp can then be removed by washing several times with plenty



[Photo News Ltd.]

Silver beet is almost immune from serious disease. Plants from seed sown in January may be set out 8in. apart in rows 18in. apart.

of water. Finally, the seed should be strained in a fine sieve and spread out to dry as quickly as possible.

### Lettuce

Seed may also be saved from specially-selected lettuce plants, as there is little chance of cross-fertilisation. Lettuces are shallow-rooting plants, and the flowering heads should be protected against stormy conditions. Ripe branches should be cut close to the main stem, tied in small bunches, and hung in a moderately warm place where there is a good current of fresh air. The seeds may be harvested after ripening by rubbing the seed heads carefully between the hands, and, if passed through a fine sieve, most of the foreign substance can be removed.

### Cabbage or Cauliflower

In attempting to save seed from any plants of the brassica family it should be realised that unless the plant or plants selected are adequately protected, cross-fertilisation is inevitable, with disastrous results. However, the work is interesting, and, if carried out properly, may be profitable from the point of view of gaining experience.

When selected cabbage plants have reached maturity emergence of the developing seed stalk will be made easier if a shallow cut, the shape of an X, is made across the head.

It is usual with cauliflowers to permit a few heads to remain close together so that a good selection can be made. As these mature undesir-

able types are removed and used in the ordinary way, thus allowing more space for the seeding plants.

Before the flowering stage is reached, with either cabbages or cauliflowers, the plants must be completely covered from ground level so that there is no possibility of pollen-bearing insects coming in contact with the plants during the flowering period. Unless this is done, seed production of brassica crops should not be attempted, the danger of cross-pollination being too great.

The seed heads may be treated after ripening in the manner recommended for lettuces.

All seeds must be thoroughly dried before storing.

### COMMERCIAL VEGETABLE GROWING FOR EX-SERVICEMEN

Many enquiries have been received from ex-servicemen concerning horticulture, and particularly vegetable growing, as a future occupation.

The desire for a few acres of land—any kind of land—on which to build a home and begin an outdoor life of profitable employment is quite understandable, but little consideration seems to have been given by most inquirers to the capital investment which may be involved. Nor has sufficient consideration been given to proximity to favourable markets for produce grown, suitability of the area selected, or of the soil for the crops it is intended to grow, the availability of assistance—if and when required—by