

Two good varieties are Tauranga Red and the common native variety.

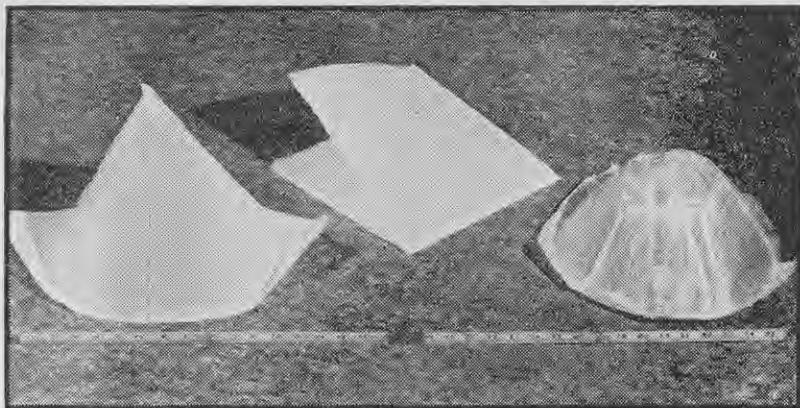
Lettuce

Lettuce should be grown in every home garden; it thrives best in cool, fertile soils, and if suitable varieties are chosen, it is possible in most home gardens to harvest them the year round. Plant breeders have produced varieties that have shown remarkable adaptation to hot, dry conditions, and by so doing have now made it possible to produce this valuable salad crop at the time of the year when it is most appreciated.

Any rich soil is suitable for the growing of lettuce. The plant is sensitive to the lack of lime, and if the soil is inclined to be acid, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of lime per square yard should be applied. For best results the soil should be built up with humus by adding compost or well-rotted manure. Fresh stable manure or undecomposed material should not be dug into the soil just before setting out plants, but should be first rotted down and applied some time beforehand.

Quick growth is essential to produce crisp, tender heads, and if growth is slow, they are liable to be tough and have a bitter taste. A fertiliser with a heavy proportion of nitrogen, such as blood and bone, broadcast at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. per square yard after digging and before planting should give good results. Just before the plants begin to heart nitrate of soda applied between the rows (it should not come in contact with the plant stem or foliage) at the rate of 1 oz. per square yard and worked lightly in will promote continual growth. Weekly applications of liquid animal manure may be used instead of nitrate of soda.

Seed is best sown thinly $\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep in rows 6 in. apart in a seedling bed and the plants transplanted out when



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Hot caps may be made from white waxed paper ready cut to size, 23 in. x 22 in. The cap on the left is made by folding the paper into four and stitching up one side. The cap on the right is made from the same paper and is reinforced by two 4 in. strips of similar paper placed crosswise from corner to corner and attached by running a hot iron over the whole sheet. This operation, beside attaching the strips, also warms up the waxed paper and makes it pliable for putting over a mould (an old car headlamp is suitable for this purpose). After it has been over the mould 1 or 2 minutes the cap is removed. For ventilation a hole 1 in. in diameter is made in the side of cap.

between 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 in. in diameter. It is hardy and can be grown equally well in hot or in cool weather and usually does well if sown in October. It grows best in a soil that is well drained and rich in humus, and for most soils a mixture of 2 parts of blood and bone and 1 part of superphosphate applied at the rate of 3 to 4 oz. per square yard will be found beneficial.

Seedlings may be transplanted, but seed is usually sown $\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep in rows 12 to 15 in. apart and later the plants are thinned to 6 to 8 in. in the rows. Kohl rabi should not be allowed to receive a check in growth through lack of moisture, as this causes it to have a bitter flavour.

Recommended varieties: Large Green and Large Purple.

Kumaras

Kumaras (sweet potatoes) will succeed only in localities where no frosts occur for a period of 5 months, and in the South Island, except perhaps in the northern districts, they can rarely be grown to maturity. The plants for setting out in October or November are usually raised by starting last season's tubers into growth by placing them in a hotbed or in soil in a glasshouse. When the rooted shoots are a few inches long they are planted a few inches apart in good compost soil in seed boxes or trays placed in cool frames or in a sheltered situation to develop further. Rooted cuttings from tubers started in late August should be ready for setting out in late October or early November. Most home gardeners prefer to purchase plants which are available at planting time from seeds-

men or nurserymen in districts where this vegetable can be grown.

Kumaras will grow in almost any well-drained soil, but prefer a warm, sandy or volcanic type that is not too deep and with a fairly hard subsoil. The application of farmyard or stable manure or any nitrogenous fertiliser to the land immediately before planting is not recommended; land that was well manured for a previous crop is ideal. If fertiliser is applied, it should consist of a mixture of equal parts of bonedust and superphosphate plus 10 per cent. of sulphate of potash. This should be sown in a 12 in. band along the row on the surface of the soil and the soil drawn up over it, forming a ridge about 6 in. high and 15 in. wide with a slightly-flattened top. The quantity of the fertiliser used depends on the fertility of the soil, but a general dressing is $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to 4 yds. of row. All manure should be applied as a base dressing, because side dressings encourage the roots to spread and the tubers to form too far out from the row.

When conditions are favourable the plants may be set out on a warm day 16 in. apart. Care should be taken to bend the root of each plant and to cover it to the same depth as it was in the nursery bed. The bending of the root to form a letter J, with the tail under the ground, is important, as it retards the sap flow from the root to the leaves, causing better tuber development and heavier cropping than result from perpendicular planting. After-culture should always be shallow and is confined to weed control and occasional raising of the vines to prevent rooting at the nodes. If they are allowed to become attached to the soil, they make heavy top growth at the expense of the tubers.



[Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd. photo. A hot cap being removed from the mould.