

The onion crop will now have reached the stage when the bulbs are forming. In any further cultivation work necessary to suppress weed growth the soil should not be drawn up to cover the bulb, which develops best on top of the ground. If planting has been a little too deep, it is an advantage to press the soil away from the onion and expose the bulb as is shown in the illustration on this page. In doing this care must be taken not to damage the roots of the plant.

## Asparagus

In districts where harvesting has been in progress for a period of 8 weeks (usually round about the end of November for northern and toward the end of December for southern districts) cutting of the spears should be discontinued. The beds should be weeded and lightly cultivated and should receive a dressing of blood and bone manure at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. per square yard plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of sulphate of potash per square yard; if available, a good dressing of wood ashes can be substituted for the potash.

Compost spread over the surface soil is excellent and will also assist the growth of a strong, healthy fern, which is so necessary to enable the roots to develop and store up food for next season's growth. Strong fern growth also assists in the suppression of weeds, and once it becomes established the beds should require little attention during summer.

## Broad Beans

Broad beans sown in May under reasonable conditions will be ready for picking in October, and later sowings will extend the harvest period to December, when they are of value in the home garden, as the varieties of vegetables ready for harvesting at that time are rather limited. As the plants begin to flower or when they are about 2ft. high pinch the top out of each stem, as this makes the pods set better. When boiled like spinach the tops of broad beans make a delicious vegetable. To maintain the strength of the plant and to prolong the bearing period the pods should be gathered as they become ready for use. Once the plants are allowed to mature their seeds they stop flowering and die off.

## Dwarf and Climbing Beans

Provided sufficient moisture is maintained, french beans may be harvested in northern districts from the beginning of December until the plants are cut down by early winter frosts. To secure continued harvesting during this period it is necessary to make successional sowings every 3 weeks right up to the end of January. In the colder parts of New Zealand the season for beans is, of course, much shorter, but should be spread as long as possible by using the warmest positions for early and late sowings. Sown under favourable conditions dwarf beans produce their first beans in 7 to 9 weeks; annual climbing beans require 10 to 12 weeks. For late sow-

ing the situation should be warm and sheltered, particularly if there is a likelihood of a cool autumn.

Beans will grow in many types of soil, but prefer a good friable loam well supplied with organic matter. If the soil is not low in food material, the only manures required are a mixture of equal parts of superphosphate and bonedust sown along each side of the rows at the rate of 4oz. to 8ft. of row when the plants are well up. Artificial fertiliser should not be sown with the bean seed, as it may cause poor germination of the seed through burning.

For dwarf varieties drills 18in. to 2ft. apart and 3 in. deep are drawn out with the hoe. The seed is sown in a double row along the wide drill, the seeds being "staggered" and not placed opposite each other; seeds should be 3in. apart. Cover the seed with soil and rake the surface level.

Climbing beans require support. This may be provided by a wire-netting fence, preferably 6 to 8ft. high, the seeds being set 6 to 8in. apart in a single row each side and 5in. out from the netting. Alternatively the beans can be supported by wooden stakes 6 to 8ft. long placed in a double row and spaced 1ft. apart each way. The stakes are drawn together in pairs at the top and attached to a cross stake; two seeds are set, one each side of the stake.

Another method is to place 4 stakes 6 to 8ft. long 2ft. apart each way to form a square. The tops are drawn together wigwam fashion and tied, the operation being repeated to form a row of wigwams; 3 seeds are set to each stake.

When vines of climbers are 2ft. 6in. high the tops of runners should be pinched off. This causes the flower buds to form much lower on the vine than if it were let grow at will. This operation can be repeated when the vine has grown another 2ft. in height.

Watering may be necessary during dry spells. Dryness of the root is often a cause of disappointment with the bean crop and is the main cause of the flowers failing to set. The hoe should be kept busy suppressing weed growth during dry weather.

**Varieties recommended** for planting during December and January are:—

**Dwarf:** The Prince, Sydney Wonder, Black Valentine, and Surprise.

**Climbing:** Fardenlosa and Market Wonder.

## Carrots

Carrots may be classified into the following types:—

**Long rooted:** Mature roots may be 10in. long or more and taper to a distinctly long, drawn-out point. They penetrate deeply, and therefore the plants may get more water once established than shorter-rooted kinds. This may be important in dry seasons in certain areas. Long-rooted varieties do best on a comparatively light, deep soil of medium quality. Recommended varieties are Intermediate and Altringham.

**Medium length:** Usually less than 8in. in length. The varieties of this group, Chantenay, Earlykrop, Man-



[Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd. photo.]

Onions form bulbs best on the surface of the ground, and when they are planted too deep the soil should be pressed away from the plants.