

THE HOME GARDEN IN DECEMBER . . .

Recommended varieties are:—

London Flag: A good early sort and very hardy.

Musselburgh (Scotch leek): Best for general cropping, is hardy, and forms a longer and thicker stem than London Flag (from which it is a selection), with large but somewhat narrower leaves.

Lyon: Good for a late crop, as it is slow to run to seed in spring and grows to a very large size.

Parsnips

Parsnips require a long growing season, and although they can be planted in December and January in most northern districts, the only variety that is likely to succeed from a late sowing in districts south of Auckland is the turnip-rooted type.

Parsnips grow best on land that was heavily manured for a previous crop; the seed may be sown fairly thickly $\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep in drills 18 in. apart in soil that has been worked down to a fine tilth. Later the plants should be thinned to 4 to 6 in. apart.

The best variety of parsnip is Hollow Crown, but the turnip-rooted parsnip matures quickly and is good for shallow soils. It is of first-class flavour and well worth a trial.

Swedes

Swedes can be sown in northern districts from September to February, but October and November are perhaps the best months for southern districts. They succeed best under cool, moist conditions with neither dry nor very wet periods. They should not receive a check while growing, as this may cause them to become woody and tasteless. Late sowings when mature may be stored and used throughout winter and spring.

The ground must be in good condition, and land that has been heavily manured for a preceding crop is well

adapted for the growing of swedes. If manuring is necessary, equal parts of superphosphate and blood and bone broadcast over the area at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. per square yard and raked in when preparing the ground is satisfactory. A good dressing of wood ashes applied at the same time will also benefit the crop. Sow the seed $\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep in rows 12 to 15 in. apart and later thin the plants to 6 to 8 in. apart in the rows.

Recommended varieties are Laing's Garden and Superlative.

Tomatoes

Over the past century the tomato (*Lycopersicum esculentum*), which is a native of South America, has become very prominent in the national diet, ousting in popularity practically all vegetables except the potato. It is grown in nearly all home gardens and is extensively cultivated commercially. Besides being eaten raw, it can be used for making soups, chutneys, sauce, and jam.

In the North Island and in the warmer parts of the South Island tomatoes may still be planted for the late crop. Plants set out now will produce their first fruits in late March and will continue to bear until killed by early-winter frosts. Late plantings should be supported, for if allowed to lie on the soil, the plants and fruit are more susceptible to blight.

Plants in this late planting, especially where potato blight is experienced, will have to be sprayed frequently with Bordeaux mixture (4oz. of bluestone and 5oz. of hydrated lime to 4 gallons of water) or with certified copper oxychloride mixture, to which has been added 2oz. of lead arsenate powder for the control of the tomato worm; instead of lead arsenate $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of commercial D.D.T. 50 per cent. wettable powder may be used.

Where soil conditions are dry watering is necessary to maintain soil moisture. The plants should not be watered overhead if it can be avoided, as wetting the foliage not only washes off the protective spray, but may cause damage to the plant through sun scald. Irrigation is best, and thorough moistening of the soil around the plants in one application is much better than small, frequent applications.

Recommended late varieties are Potentate, Supreme, and Market Favourite.

Winter Greens

During the more favourable growing periods of the year there is little difficulty in having a succession of available green vegetables, but the supply for the winter months presents a more difficult problem to most home gardeners. Although root and stored crops such as pumpkins are a good standby, a regular supply of green vegetables (which are so rich in essential vitamins) is desirable.

For southern districts December, January, and February are the preferred months for planting winter green crops. In the North Island, where the climatic conditions are much milder, the planting period can be extended to April by using earlier-maturing kinds.

Plants may be obtained from seedmen and should be set out in a rich, deeply cultivated, well-drained soil. A fertiliser mixture containing nitrogen, phosphoric acid, and potash is advisable, and a good mixture is 10 lb. of blood and bone, 3 lb. of superphosphate, and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of sulphate of potash; this should be applied along the plant rows at the rate of 8 oz. to 6 ft. of row. It should be thoroughly incorporated in the soil before planting to avoid possible damage to the plant roots.

Moisture is essential during dry weather and the soil should not be permitted to dry out. In districts where pests such as white butterfly are troublesome the plants should be protected by dusting or spraying them with the recommended controls such as dusting plants with commercial D.D.T. dusting powder or spraying them with commercial D.D.T. wettable powder. For a 50 per cent wettable powder use $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in 4 gallons of water and for a 25 per cent powder 1 oz. in 4 gallons. Applications should be made every 3 or 4 weeks, but should be discontinued 4 weeks before using the vegetables.

As a wide range of varieties are suitable for planting, the following can be chosen from; approximate maturity dates are shown in parentheses for December plantings:—

Broccoli: Broccoli No. 1 and St. Valentine (August and September), Broccoli No. 2 (October), and Broccoli No. 3 (October and November).

Cauliflower: Early London and Phenomenal Early (March and April), Phenomenal Five Months and Veitch's Autumn Giant (May and June), and Phenomenal Main Crop and Walcheren (July and August).

Savoy cabbage: Omskirk Early (April and May), Drumhead (May and June), and Omega (July and August).

Kale: Dwarf Green (March), and Tall Green (April).

Brussels sprouts: Scrymger's Giant and Fillbasket (April and May).

DAIRY PRODUCE GRADED FOR EXPORT

THE following figures showing quantities of dairy produce graded for export during September and for the 2 months ended September 30, 1949, with comparative figures for the same month and 2-monthly period of last year, have been compiled by the Dairy Division of the Department of Agriculture from figures supplied by divisional officers at the various grading ports:—

BUTTER—

Period	Creamery	Tons		Tons	
		Whey	Total	Percentage inc. or dec.	Total in store at end of mth.
September, 1949	16,183	273	16,456	+24,572	17,135
September, 1948	12,980	230	13,210	—	13,874
Increase or decrease	+3,203	+43	+3,246	—	+3,261
For 2 months ended 30/9/49	25,142	379	25,521	+26,567	—
For 2 months ended 30/9/48	19,855	309	20,164	—	—
Increase or decrease	+5,287	+70	+5,357	—	—

CHEESE—

Period	White	Tons		Tons	
		Coloured	Total	Percentage inc. or dec.	Total in store at end of mth.
September, 1949	5,533	1,892	7,425	+15,618	8,495
September, 1948	6,422	—	6,422	—	7,821
Increase or decrease	—889	+1,892	+1,003	—	+674
For 2 months ended 30/9/49	6,927	1,982	8,909	+16,579	—
For 2 months ended 30/9/48	7,642	—	7,642	—	—
Increase or decrease	—715	+1,982	+1,267	—	—

If these figures are converted into butterfat equivalent, there is an increase of 25,086 per cent. in butterfat graded for the 2 months as compared with the corresponding period of the preceding season. It should be noted that the above figures refer only to butter and cheese graded for export, and that owing to diversions which may take place from time to time, they are not necessarily a true indication of production trends.