

sorts to 3in. apart in the rows. When thinning out be careful to "single" the plants, as generally two or more grow from the same seed vessel.

Provided beetroot follows a crop that was liberally manured, no artificial fertiliser is required.

When cultivating, care should be taken not to cut or injure the sides of the roots, and this same precaution must be taken when lifting them out of the ground, as a wound or broken root allows the sap to escape and the colour of the beet is lost.

**Recommended varieties** are: Round or turnip-rooted types, Derwent Globe, Early Wonder, and Egyptian Turnip Rooted; long varieties, Obelisk.

## Silver Beet or Swiss Chard

Silver beet, which is quite distinct from red beet, is grown solely for the leaves and stalks and does not form a root that is edible. Silver beet is easier to grow than spinach and the young leaves stripped from the stalks make a good substitute for spinach. The white stalks may be cooked separately and served with white sauce or the whole leaf may be used.

Silver beet requires a rich, well-manured soil and a fine, thoroughly prepared seed-bed. Seed can be sown during August, but in cold localities sowing is better delayed until September; it is not necessary to plant a succession, as plants will continue to bear until they are cut down by frost or have run to seed in the following spring. Sow the seed in rows 24 to 30in. apart, allowing about ½in. between the seeds and covering them with about ¼in. of soil. Thin plants to 15in. apart in the rows when they are 4 to 6in. high. Thinnings can be transplanted or can be cooked as greens.

Silver beet should be ready for the first cutting in 2 months from seed sowing. For home use it should be harvested by breaking or cutting off the outer stalks about 1 or 2in. above ground, care being taken to avoid injuring the crown or central bud. New stalks are produced from the centre of the plant, and repeated cuttings may be made. When the stalks are mature they should be removed, whether wanted or not, to promote continuous growth.

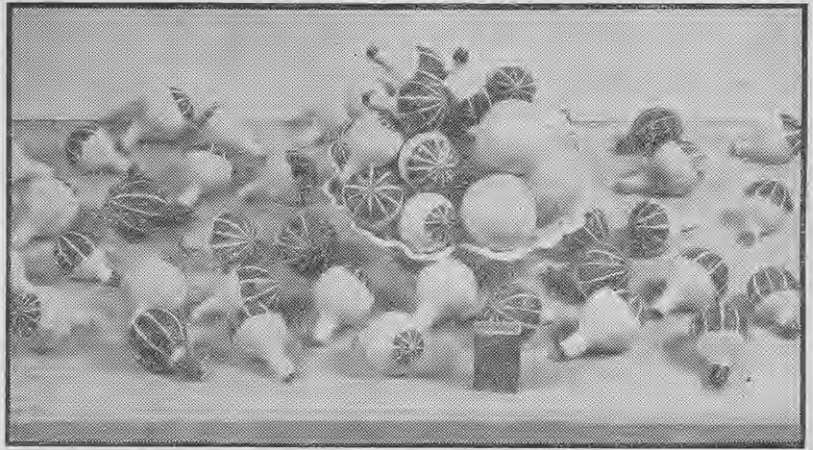
**Good varieties** are Lucullus, Fordhook Giant, and Dark Green Broad Ribbed.

## Spinach

Spinach is a quick-maturing vegetable and among the first of the new season's crops to mature. It does well in early spring provided the soil has been previously well manured and limed. A fertiliser composed of 3 parts of superphosphate and 1 part of sulphate of ammonia by weight and applied at the rate of 2 or 3oz. a square yard will provide the stimulus necessary to produce crisp, succulent growth so desirable in this vegetable. Seed should be sown ½ to 1in. deep in rows 1ft. apart and plants should be thinned later to 3in. apart. For summer and autumn use, the round-seeded variety is best.

## New Zealand Spinach, Mustard Spinach

New Zealand spinach is not a true spinach, but is quite a good substitute and thrives only during hot weather,



[Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd. photo.]

**Novelty vegetables:** Ornamental gourds (of the order *Cucurbita pepo*) are very prolific and have varying skin colours and markings ranging from dark green to bright yellow. The fruit has a hard, wax-like rind. It is not edible and is used solely for decorative purposes. The fruits illustrated, with the exception of the three round fruits on right side of dish, which are orange marrows, are from one plant. Orange marrows besides being useful vegetables are interesting novelties. If displayed in a fruit bowl, they look like oranges.

which makes it suitable for growing under conditions in which true spinach tends to bolt to seed.

Mustard spinach is related to the mustard family, but the pungent taste of the mustard has been greatly refined. It has a most delicious flavour peculiarly its own and combines in itself the qualities of both spinach and mustard.

## Shallots

August is the best month for setting shallots. The shallot is a member of the genus *Allium*, closely allied to the onion, but quite distinct from it. Its bulbs are used in seasoning, the flavour being milder than that of the onion, and sometimes the green leaves are cut and used in salads. The shallot requires a fairly rich soil, but should not be planted on freshly manured land. If there is no soil in the correct condition, a plot should be manured well some weeks before planting. For planting break the bulbs into small cloves, draw drills 1in. deep and 24in. apart, and place the cloves from 6 to 8in. apart in the drills; press them into the ground and cover them lightly with soil. Frequent and thorough cultivation is all that is necessary for their success. If desired, the bulbs can be blanched by covering them with 2in. of soil about 4 weeks before harvesting.

## Salsify or Oyster Plant

Salsify or vegetable oyster plant, with its long, narrow, fleshy root resembles a very narrow parsnip. The roots grow about 15 to 18in. long and are about 1½in. in diameter. Properly cooked they are a most delicious vegetable, having the flavour of stewed oysters.

To get the best results from salsify the soil should be prepared as recommended for parsnips; good-quality roots depend to a large extent on the preparation of the soil. As the roots

are more liable to fork than parsnips or carrots, ground that has been well manured for a previous crop is preferable to that which has to be manured just before being cropped.

Sow seed in August or September in drills ½in. deep and 12 to 15in. apart, and when the seedlings are about 3in. high, thin them out to 6in. between the plants. The roots will be ready for lifting in February, when they may be harvested as required or lifted and stored in sand in a cool place to prevent the roots from shrivelling. The leaves of salsify, when properly blanched, make a delicious salad, and if some plants are required for this purpose, roots should be placed in an upright position in a box of sand and stored away from the light in a shed and the leaves gathered as they develop.

## Herbs

Herbs such as parsley, mint, sage, and thyme should have a place in every home garden. They are best planted where they are easily accessible to the housewife, and a good effect is achieved if they are planted as a border at one end of the garden or adjacent to a pathway.

## Parsley

Parsley is hardy and quite easily grown. Once established it does well and if not cut too heavily will continue to yield steadily until it flowers, after which its value is lost.

For summer and autumn supply seed should be sown now. Draw out shallow drills and sow the seed in rows 12in. apart, covering it with not more than ½in. of soil. Parsley seed is slow in germinating, taking from 4 to 5 weeks to come up. When the plants are well above ground, thin them out to 12in. apart in the rows. Do not permit the plants to crowd at any time. Pick parsley as required, but never strip the plants right down. To prolong the yield cut off seed stalks