

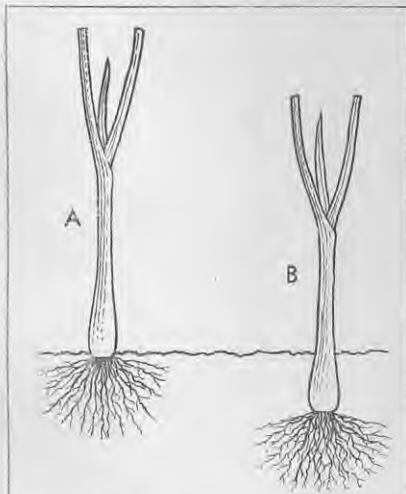
Leeks

The leek is a member of the onion family and is a most delicious vegetable cooked or raw. Raw it is more tender and milder in flavour than the ordinary spring onion. It is very hardy and can quite easily be grown from seed sown in September or October for planting out in December and January. These plantings should give a continuous supply from May to August. Select a warm position in well-drained soil and sow the seed in drills $\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep and 6 in. apart. As the seedlings take a long time to grow large enough for transplanting (lead-pencil thickness), frequent shallow cultivation is necessary to check weed growth and to aerate the soil.

Varieties: Of the three popular varieties London Flag, Lyon, and Musselburgh, the last named is best for general use.

Onions

In northern districts, where it is usual to sow seed in autumn and transplant onions in spring, September is a favourable month to do transplanting. Where transplanting is not practised seed should be sown now in the permanent rows. The ground should be well cultivated and manured some time in advance of sowing the seed. Although a firm bed is required, the surface of the soil should be of a fine tilth to a depth of 1 in.; if it is too consolidated, a crust which may seriously affect the germination of the seed may be formed. The amount of firming required is dependent on whether the soil is light or heavy. Light soil can be firmed by treading it whereas raking is usually sufficient for heavier soils. The onion plant requires a liberal quantity of available plant food and does best in soils that have been under cultivation for some time. The heavier soil types generally produce better-keeping onions. If compost or farmyard or poultry



Transplanting autumn-sown onions. The leaves and roots of the seedlings have been trimmed for transplanting. A is set at the correct depth, though it may appear shallow. If seedlings are planted too deep, as in B, thick-necked or irregular-shaped bulbs will result.

THE HOME GARDEN IN SEPTEMBER



[Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd. photo.]

Early potatoes should be hoed frequently to promote growth, the soil being drawn up to form a ridge as they grow. Plants should be protected from frost damage by covering them at night. Straw or hay is very suitable for this.

manure is not available, equal parts of bonedust and superphosphate plus 10 per cent. of sulphate of potash, broadcast over the area at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to the square yard and worked into the top 3 in. of soil, will suffice for most soil types. A good dressing of wood ashes may be used in place of potash. The onion is very sensitive to soil acidity, and where periodical liming has not been practised at least 3 to 4 oz. of carbonate of lime to the square yard should be applied.

Sow the seed thinly $\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep in rows 12 in. apart, cover it with fine soil, and firm the soil over the seed.

Where onions are to be transplanted soil preparation is similar to that for a seed-bed. Shallow drills 12 in. apart and 1 in. deep are drawn out and plants set out 4 in. apart in the drill. The roots are covered and firmed by drawing soil over them; alternatively the area may be marked out and the roots of the plants pressed into the soil at the correct spacings. (See the diagram on this page.) Plants need not be set upright, as they will soon straighten up after planting. Good bulbs will not develop if the plants are set too deeply. If roots are trimmed and tops shortened, planting can be done more easily and plants are not so likely to topple over after being set out. Cultivation should be sufficient to keep the surface soil aerated and check weed growth. It should always be shallow, care being taken not to injure the sides of the bulbs, because if they are cut, further growth will increase the size of the wound, and the keeping quality of the onion will be impaired.

Varieties: Straw Spanish, Pukekohe Long Keeper, and Brown Spanish are good-keeping varieties. If onions are not required for long storage, there are several high-yielding sorts, such as Ailsa Craig, Giant Rocca, and Golden Globe.

Green or Spring Onions from Sets

Stored onions should be examined and those bulbs that are beginning to

shoot should be used or may be planted out in the garden. Draw out furrows 4 in. deep and 15 in. apart and set the bulbs 6 in. apart in the rows just covering them with soil. By this method spring onions can be produced quickly. As growth develops seed stalks may appear and should be broken off as soon as they become visible. However, unless they are used promptly, onions grown in this manner soon become pungent and tough.

Potato Onions

Potato onions, which are of mild and pleasant flavour, are increased by dividing the compact clusters at the bases of the plants. The small bulbs are transplanted and grow into large ones which if left form further compact clusters. Culture is similar to that for shallots, which was described in last month's notes.

Egyptian or Perennial Tree Onion

The Egyptian or perennial tree onion produces a cluster of little bulbs on the top of a stalk. The bottom also divides, but large bulbs are not produced. The bulblets are used for pickles and salads. The top sets or bottom divisions are planted in May or September, preferably the former month, in furrows 4 in. deep and 15 in. apart, with 6 in. between sets in the row.

As soon as frosts are over in spring the tops start to grow. Those produced from the underground bulbs are soon ready for use and those from top sets shortly afterward. This type of onion becomes very coarse and strong as the season advances, but early in the season is quite palatable.

Garlic

Garlic, a vegetable which is often regarded with disfavour, is eaten, though usually unknowingly, by many people as a flavouring and seasoning