

ROOT AND GREEN FORAGE CROPS

SEASONAL NOTES Contributed
by the EXTENSION DIVISION

PREPARATION of land for spring- and summer-sown root and green forage crops should be well advanced in most districts in September, but on light soils in the higher-rainfall districts the initial ploughing may often be delayed until October or even November. There are large areas of inferior grassland in most dairying districts which could well be ploughed, cropped, and resown to pasture, using Certified grass and clover seed. In such a programme root and green forage crops are useful both for supplementary feeding and for preparing the land for resowing to grass.

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JAPANESE MILLET In the warmer parts of the North Island Japanese millet is often a very useful supplementary feeding crop for dairy cows in January and February. The illustration on this page shows an 8-acre Taranaki field of millet. A crop of silage was cut from old grass on the field on November 20; the field was then ploughed and worked down and sown in millet on November 28. The crop was 10in. high on January 1 and gave excellent greenfeed during January and February for 100 cows. The field was ploughed and resown to grass on March 13.

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HYBRID SEED MAIZE As in the United States of America, outstanding results are being obtained in this country by using hybrid seed maize. The Department of Agriculture is now producing in New Zealand from single-cross parent material imported each year Certified seed of the double-hybrid known as Pfister No. 360. In a series of trials over a number of years this hybrid has out-yielded local strains of maize and has shown a high standard of quality and uniformity. For best results fresh hybrid seed should be sown each year instead of retaining seed from the crop produced from hybrid seed. Seed supplies of Pfister No. 360 are available from the Department of Agriculture, Gisborne, through seed merchants.

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BRASSICA SEEDS For the last 10 years New Zealand has been self-supporting in turnip, swede, and rape seeds and in chou moellier and kale seeds. The Department of Agriculture has supervised the production of most of the seed grown, and this produce has been distributed as either Certified or Government approved.

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RAPE Certified seed of three varieties of rape is available. The standard varieties are Broad Leaf Essex and Giant, and seed of Club Root Resistant is available for sowing where the presence of club root disease prevents the growing of a satisfactory crop of the other varieties.

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SWEDES Seed of six varieties of swedes is recognised as Government approved. The range covered is typical of the range of varieties imported before the war, and farmers requiring this crop for feeding over a period should grow more than one variety. Superlative, Grandmaster, and Crimson King are the standard varieties; Resistant is a late-maturing variety with some claim to disease resistance. Sensation is a deep-rooting, white-fleshed swede more suited to drier areas, and Calder is a locally bred variety released only in 1949. It is somewhat similar in performance to Sensation, but has a yellow flesh.



A field of Japanese millet used for summer supplementary feed.

CHOU MOELLIER Two varieties of Certified chou moellier seed are Giant and Medium Stemmed. The Giant variety develops a larger and thicker "marrow-cored" stem, more suited to cattle feeding, whereas the Medium Stemmed variety is usually preferred for sheep feeding.

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KALE Seed of a selection of thousand-headed kale is recognised as Government approved. Kale retains its leaf growth longer into the winter than chou moellier, but its stem is more fibrous and rarely eaten by stock.

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YELLOW-FLESHED TURNIPS Five varieties of Government-approved seed of yellow-fleshed turnips are available. Purple Top Yellow and Green Top Yellow are hard-fleshed turnips of the imported Aberdeen types. Purple Resistant and Green Resistant are very similar, but possess a marked degree of resistance to club root. Soft Green Top Yellow under certain conditions is higher yielding than the other varieties, but its flesh is softer and its keeping qualities inferior.

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WHITE-FLESHED TURNIPS Government-approved seed of three varieties of white-fleshed turnips is available. Green Globe is the standard white-fleshed variety with a firm flesh and good keeping quality. Red Globe and Purple Globe are earlier maturing and more suitable for late-summer and early-autumn feeding.

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GERMINATION OF GOVERNMENT-APPROVED BRASSICA SEEDS Though Certified brassica seeds carry official tags showing the identification of the purity and germination certificate corresponding to the line, this information is not available with Government-approved seeds. With turnips, swedes, and kale, all Government-approved seed of each variety is made up into one blend before making the season's deliveries, and the germination of the seeds