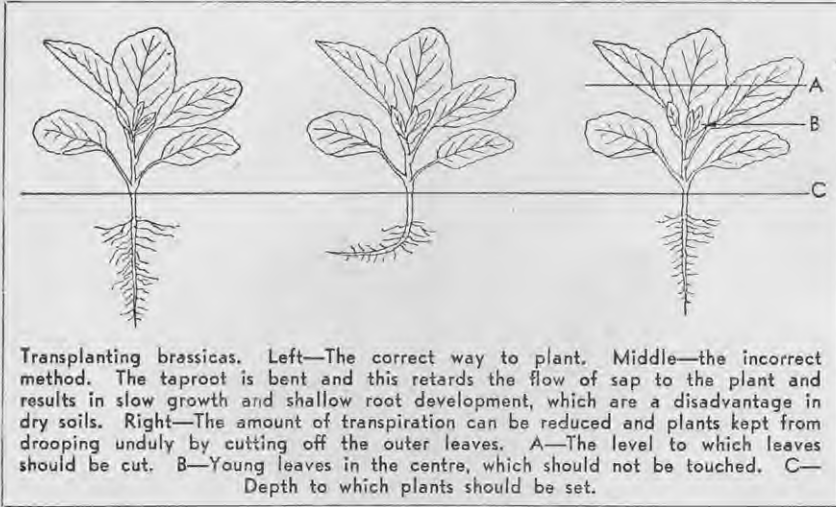


## THE HOME GARDEN IN DECEMBER



Transplanting brassicas. Left—The correct way to plant. Middle—the incorrect method. The taproot is bent and this retards the flow of sap to the plant and results in slow growth and shallow root development, which are a disadvantage in dry soils. Right—The amount of transpiration can be reduced and plants kept from drooping unduly by cutting off the outer leaves. A—The level to which leaves should be cut. B—Young leaves in the centre, which should not be touched. C—Depth to which plants should be set.

sufficient earth around the roots. When transplanting, the leaves should be trimmed and the roots shortened to within  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. of the bulb.

Gradually fill in the holes when cultivating and as the plants grow mould the soil up around them to cause the stems to lengthen. To secure a well-blanching stem the plant needs to be covered fairly deeply by soil. Cultivate frequently between the rows and around the plants to conserve soil moisture and check weeds. Be careful when hoeing or drawing up the soil not to cover the heart of the plant. Leeks require plenty of moisture and must be kept well watered in dry weather while the crop is growing.

Leeks may also be set in trenches 6 in. deep similarly to celery. The trenches may be narrower than those used for celery, but the plants require more room and should be spaced 12 in. apart for this method.

Leeks can be used any time after they have grown to a usable size, but if left long enough under favourable conditions they will grow to at least  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. in diameter with usable stalks 8 to 12 in. long. Leeks keep well right through the winter and will not deteriorate in quality until they begin to develop seed stalks in spring.

Recommended varieties are:—

**London Flag:** This is a good early sort and very hardy.

**Musselburgh** is the best variety 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:** This variety is suitable for a late crop, as it is slow to run to seed in spring and grows very large.

### Parsnips

Parsnips require a long growing season, and although a December sowing can be expected to succeed in the warmer northern districts, the only type likely to grow to a usable size in southern districts when sown in December is the turnip-rooted varieties.

For best results the land should have been heavily manured for a previous crop; the seed should be sown fairly thickly  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. deep in drills

18 in. apart in well-prepared soil and the plants thinned later to 4 in. apart.

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

### Swedes

Swedes can be sown now in most districts. Usually they are preferred as a winter vegetable, and as they keep well under cool conditions, they are a valuable addition to the supply of vegetables during winter. The ground should be well prepared, and land that has been heavily manured for a preceding crop is well adapted for the growing of swedes. If it is necessary to add manure, a mixture of equal parts of blood and bone and superphosphate plus 5 per cent. of sulphate of potash broadcast over the area at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. a square yard and raked in when preparing the ground is satisfactory. Seed should be sown thinly  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. deep in rows 15 in. apart and the plants thinned when they are about 2 in. high to 6 to 8 in. apart in the rows.

Recommended varieties are Laing's Garden and Superlative.

### Tomatoes

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 continue the supply of this valuable vegetable until they are cut down by early-winter frosts. Late plantings should be supported, because if plants and fruit are allowed to lie on the soil, they are more susceptible to blight. As plants grown at this season of the year often fail because of an attack of blight, they should be sprayed at intervals of 10 days with Bordeaux mixture (4oz. of bluestone and 5oz. of hydrated lime in 4 gallons of water) or with copper oxychloride to which has been added  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of commercial D.D.T. 50 per cent. wettable powder.

When soil conditions are dry water should be applied. The plants should not be watered overhead if it can be avoided, as this not only washes off the protective spray, but may cause damage to the plant through sun scald.

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

### Winter Greens

The provision of a supply of winter greens is a problem for many home gardeners. During the favourable growing periods of the year there is little difficulty in providing a succession of green vegetables, but it is much more difficult to maintain a supply in winter. Although root crops are a good standby, most gardeners desire a regular supply of green vegetables rich in the vitamins especially required during winter.

In southern districts December, January, and February are the preferred months for planting winter green crops. In the North Island, because of milder conditions, the planting period can be extended to April or even later for some varieties.

The principal winter green crops are cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, and kale; plants may be obtained from seedsmen. They should be planted in a rich, deeply cultivated, well-drained soil. The incorporation of organic material such as well-rotted stable or farmyard manure or compost or the digging in of a heavy green crop is desirable on most home garden soils. In addition a fertiliser mixture consisting of 10 lb. of blood and bone, 3 lb. of superphosphate, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of sulphate of potash should be applied along the plant rows at the rate of 8oz. to 6ft. of row. It should be well mixed with the soil before planting to avoid possible damage to the plant roots.

Moisture is essential during dry weather and the soil must not be permitted to dry out. Where insect pests such as white butterfly are troublesome plants should be protected by dusting them with D.D.T. dusting powder or spraying them with D.D.T. wettable powder. With a 50 per cent. wettable powder use  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. in 4 gallons of water and with a 25 per cent. powder 1oz. in 4 gallons. A wetter, spreader, or sticker should be used to increase the efficiency of the spray, because it will make the droplets adhere better than where such an agent is not employed. Particularly is this so on the waxy-surfaced leaves of plants of the cabbage family, although it applies to some extent to most plants. Applications should be made every 3 or 4 weeks, but should be discontinued 4 weeks before using the vegetables.

There is a wide range of varieties suitable for planting out this month and a selection may be made from the following (approximate maturity dates are shown in parentheses):—

**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 5 Months and Veitch's Autumn Giant (May and June), and Phenomenal Main Crop and Walch-eren (July and August).

**Savoy cabbage:** Omskirck 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).