

weed control is unnecessary on most soils.

Bulbs of the common variety have membranous, silvery white skins, though there are pink and red varieties. Culture is generally similar to that of shallots or onions. Bulbs may mature in favourable conditions in about 16 weeks from planting of the cloves, though a longer time is usually needed to obtain plants from seed. Early planted seed usually requires about 20 to 24 weeks.

### Mustard Greens

Alternative names for mustard greens are Chinese mustard and mustard spinach. Mustard greens are hardy, useful, and easily grown forms of greens that deserve to be more widely grown in home gardens. Though they are not commonly grown, they are not new. The improved strains now available and the modern appreciation of the value of fresh vegetables have made them better known.

There are several kinds of mustard greens—loose-leafed, broad-leafed, and curled types. The variety Tender-green, which is also known as mustard spinach, is particularly fine. It has dark green, rather thick, fairly smooth, spoon-shaped leaves and combines the flavours of mustard and spinach. As it is slow to seed, its sowing in the hotter, drier districts need not be confined to spring and autumn, as is advisable with some of the other varieties.

A hearting variety (Hearting Chinese Mustard) is also sold by some seedsmen. The leaves grow 12in. to 14in. long and the hearts, which are about 6in. to 8in. across, blanch well. The flavour of most varieties is mild.

Though some varieties will grow fairly well in the poorer soils, for best results it is advisable to grow them in rich, moist soils and in moderately cool conditions. The open varieties particularly are an excellent substitute for spinach and should be gathered in the same way, though the leaves are larger than the largest spinach leaves. Thinnings should be pulled first and used with the roots cut off, and later when the remaining plants are large enough a few of the largest leaves can be taken off as they develop. They can be removed with the fingers or a pair of scissors and should be used when young and tender; they can be cooked like spinach or used in salads.

Seed should be sown ½in. deep in rows 15in. apart. Seedlings of the open-leafed kind should be thinned to 6in. apart in the rows and of the hearting kind to at least 9in. apart under favourable conditions. The crop should be ready for use in from 35 to 45 days from seed sowing.

### New Zealand Spinach

New Zealand spinach, which is a half-hardy, trailing annual with large, succulent leaves, can be sown in

## THE HOME GARDEN IN OCTOBER



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October. It is not a true spinach, but is valuable for use in hot, dry, sunny situations and is often preferred because it lacks the peculiar bitterness of true spinach. Growth is rapid in most soils, and it responds best to a light, fertile soil in a sunny position with adequate moisture.

New Zealand spinach is harvested by pinching off about 3in. of the growing tips, which forces new shoots to develop, so that when established the plant has a multitude of tips for gathering. It grows quite large and should be given a spacing of at least 2ft. each way.

Seed, which is usually rather slow to germinate, should be sown 1in. to 1½in. deep not more than a week before frost danger is past. Two or three seeds should be sown together at each spacing and the weaker seedlings removed after establishment.

### Parsley

Parsley is usually in constant demand and to ensure adequate supplies seed should be sown twice a year in most gardens, in spring and in autumn. The plant is a biennial and unless conditions are especially favourable, germination is usually slow; if two sowings are not made, there may be a break in supply. Parsley responds well to rich, well-

drained soils, and fertiliser is just as necessary as for other crops.

Seed can be sown in rows or broadcast on a small prepared plot, but for best results the plants should be spaced about 8in. to 12in. apart when at the seedling stage. They make quite a good edging and do well in a cool, moist soil in the open or semi-shade. Seed may be slow to germinate, but sometimes germinates quite promptly if it is first soaked or is sown in very moist soil.

There are several types of parsley, but they are rarely listed by New Zealand seedsmen. They may be grouped as follows:—

(a) Plain-leafed or Italian: This is very hardy, but rarely grown in New Zealand.

(b) Fern-leafed: The leaves of this type are deeply cut, but the segments are not twisted.

(c) Curled: This is the most popular type of parsley grown in New Zealand and most seedsmen's catalogues list varieties of it. The leaves are deeply divided into segments which are twisted or curled over.

Within these groups there are dwarf, compact, and tall varieties. In addition the variety known as Hamburg, which is included with the coarser-leaved types, has an edible root about