



The Home Garden in October

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THOUGH weather in October may at times be unsettled, the ground has warmed considerably since winter and given reasonably sunny days and good soil conditions all hardy plants will grow well. As the month progresses and danger of frost damage passes, first in the early and then in the later districts, half-hardy plants can be sown or planted.

Asparagus

In most districts asparagus shoots appear above the ground a little after the time of the last killing frost, though occasionally a severe late frost will damage the early shoots. On newly established beds—in their third year from the time of sowing the seed (the second year after planting out)—the period of cutting should not be more than about 2 weeks. In the fourth year the cutting period should not exceed about half the season or about 4 weeks. Thereafter cutting can continue each year for from about 6 to 10 weeks according to seasonal growth and vigour of the bed.

Dwarf and Runner Beans

In North Island and South Island districts not subject to late frosts an early sowing of either dwarf or climbing beans can be made from about mid-October. Whether runner, climbing (pole), or dwarf beans are grown usually depends on the space available.

Climbing beans, if well grown, yield more heavily than dwarf, and the stringless climbing varieties are not inferior in flavour and quality to the best dwarf varieties. Runner beans of the Scarlet Runner type are perennials and do not need to be resown every year. Climbing (pole) beans and dwarf beans are annuals.

Soil Preparation

The soil should be well drained and cultivated before sowing, and though it need not be more than moderately rich in organic material and nitrogen and potash, the addition of phosphates or complete fertilisers rich in phosphates has been found beneficial on many soils where trials have been carried out. Beans are tolerant of moderately acid conditions, but lime

SOW NOW

Beans (dwarf and climbing)	} When danger of frost is past or if protection can be provided
Cucumbers	
Marrows	
Melons	
Pumpkins	
Sweet corn	

Lettuces	} Successional sowings
Peas	
Radishes	
Turnips	

Cabbages	} For harvesting in autumn and winter
Cauliflowers or broccoli	

Kale	} If not sown last month
Beetroot	
Brussels sprouts	
Carrots	
Spinach or spinach beet	

PLANT OUT

Lettuces
Onions (southern districts)
Potatoes (main crop)
Tomatoes (late in month in most districts)

Silver beet	} If not planted last month
Cabbages (summer)	
Cauliflowers	

IN most districts October is the preferred month for main-crop sowings of hardy vegetables. Early sown crops should be well established and should be kept weed free. Some early crops may need thinning and where this is necessary, it is best done before the seedlings become crowded.

Where frost danger is past, or can be guarded against, frost-tender plants such as dwarf and runner beans, cucumbers, marrows, squash, pumpkins, and sweet corn can be sown and tomatoes set out. Young seedlings raised under glass can be hardened off gradually (where conditions are still too severe to permit them to be established in the open) by progressively increased exposure to outside conditions. Land to receive them can be prepared by cultivation, manuring, and the erection of shelter, stakes, or supporting wires. But in most districts sowing and planting of frost-tender vegetables are best deferred until toward the end of the month. Where killing frosts are still likely, as in most of the plains areas of Canterbury, it is advisable to delay until the first or second week in November.

Home gardeners who raise their own autumn and winter cabbages and cauliflowers or broccoli should sow during the month or in most districts not later than early November to have sturdy, well-grown plants for setting out in December or January.