

Monthly sowing guide

Month by month sowing suggestions

a vegetable sowing calendar for the year



January

... is really a month for eating your stored winter vegetables and hopefully enjoying the view of the garden from your kitchen window. However, there are a few things that you can sow right at the end of the month particularly if you live in a warmer part of the country and/or have a polytunnel or greenhouse

In trays or pots ...

- Round seeded (as opposed to wrinkle seeded) peas can be sown from late January onwards. We always start them indoors as the mice get them if we sow direct.
- Winter salads & oriental greens as above to plant outside under a cloche or mini-tunnel if you have somewhere reasonably sheltered that they can grow on.
- Onions in modules - germinate them somewhere with a little heat (a windowsill is fine) then put them in a cold frame or unheated greenhouse to grow on.

In a polytunnel or greenhouse ...

- From the end of the month, you can think about sowing hardy salads and oriental greens in warmer parts of Britain (mizuna, mibuna, mustard greens, pak choi, mispooona, komatsuna, winter varieties of lettuce, land cress)



February

... still winter time, but the days are beginning to get a little longer

In trays or pots ...

- Round seeded (as opposed to wrinkle seeded) peas
- Winter salads & oriental greens to plant outside in March, but still under a cloche or mini-tunnel
- Onions in modules - germinate them somewhere with a little heat (a windowsill is fine) then put them in a cold frame or unheated greenhouse to grow on.

In trays or pots somewhere warm (germinator/warm airing cupboard etc). Bear in mind that they will need somewhere warm & light to grow on

- Tomatoes, peppers and aubergines

In a polytunnel or greenhouse ...

- Winter salads and oriental greens (mizuna, mibuna, mustard greens, pak choi, mispoona, komatsuna, winter varieties of lettuce, land cress)
- In warmer areas sow carrots in the tunnel for an extra early crop



March/April

... depending on the year, and where you live, the soil may be starting to warm up by mid March – or it may still be frozen solid. But hopefully by April in much of Britain the main spring sowings should be getting under way

Outside (depending on weather and soil conditions)

- Root crops including the first sowings of beetroot, turnips, carrots & parsnips
- Mangetout & podding peas & broad beans - although these often do better started in pots/trays
- The first sowings of summer salads including lettuces, endive, cress, rocket, radishes
- Brassica crops for eating this summer & also through into the winter – kale, summer and (early) winter cabbages, brussels sprouts, purple sprouting broccoli, calabrese and cauliflowers
- Swiss chard & leaf beet
- Leeks

- Radishes and spring onions

In trays or pots

- If you have slug or weed problems, then you may find all of the brassica crops, leeks and salads do better started in trays/modules and then planted out when they are better able to withstand them.
- Similarly broad beans and peas may have to be started indoors if you have trouble with mice

In trays or pots somewhere warm (germinator/warm airing cupboard etc). Bear in mind that they will need somewhere warm & light to grow on

- Tomatoes, peppers and aubergines, ideally by the end of March.
- Celery/celeriac (again need heat to germinate)
- Courgettes, squashes, cucumbers and melons (but not too early, or they will get too large before the weather is good enough for them to go outside)

In a polytunnel or greenhouse direct into the border

- Summer salads
- French beans for an early crop
- Herbs including basil, coriander & parsley



May

... in most parts of the country the soil will be warming up and things will be starting to grow. Lots of sowing (and weeding!) this month

Outside

- French, runner and broad beans, mangetout & podding peas. But still think about sowing in modules/pots if you have trouble with slugs/mice etc
- Maincrop sowings of root crops - carrots, beetroot, leeks, radishes, turnips etc
- Herbs including parsley, coriander and others

- Swiss chard & leaf beet
- All the brassicas can still be sown this month for overwintering - kale, summer and winter cabbages, brussels sprouts, purple sprouting broccoli, calabrese and cauliflowers
- Keep sowing salads, especially lettuce & rocket if you like it, regularly. Much better a small sowing every 2-3 weeks than a huge patch that bolts before you can eat it
- Early sowings of fennel – if you have trouble with it bolting, wait until mid-June
- Sweetcorn – but only sow direct if the weather, and soil, are warm, otherwise start it off in modules or small pots.

In trays or pots

- Brassicas
- French, runner and broad beans, all types of peas
- Sweetcorn

In trays or pots somewhere warm (germinator/warm airing cupboard etc).

- Courgettes, squashes, cucumbers and melons - ideally best sown by the end of May

In a polytunnel or greenhouse border

- Summer salads
- Basil & coriander
- Plant out summer crops (tomatoes, peppers etc) started indoors once you're certain night time temperatures won't fall too low

June

. . . still time to sow most of the summer crops, although starting to get a bit late for courgettes, squashes & cucumbers . From the middle of the month start to sow crops for autumn & winter

Outside

- French and runner beans
- Root crops including carrots, beetroot, turnips, and also swedes for the winter
- Herbs including parsley, coriander and others
- Swiss chard & leaf beet
- Keep sowing salads, after the middle of the month including oriental salads (mizuna, mibuna, mustard greens etc)
- Fennel
- Sweetcorn

In trays or pots somewhere warm (germinator/warm airing cupboard etc).

- Courgettes, squashes, cucumbers and melons (start of the month)

In a polytunnel or greenhouse border

- Basil & coriander
- Plant out summer crops started indoors

July/August

. . . Hopefully you'll be having lots of sunshine, but enough rain to keep things growing. Don't forget to keep sowing over the summer, there are lots of things to put in now that will keep your garden productive over the winter and into next year.



Outside

- Dwarf french beans (up to early July) in warmer areas only
- Last sowings of root crops including carrots, beetroot, turnips (July)
- Winter radishes and swedes
- Swiss chard & leaf beet
- Oriental greens (mizuna, mibuna, komatsuna, mustard greens etc) and turnip greens
- Lettuce, moving over to winter varieties by late August, rocket, cress and salad radishes
- Fennel
- Spring cabbage (from late July)
- Bunching and spring onions

In a polytunnel or greenhouse border

- Coriander
- Salads, particularly in later summer as other crops finish and you have space available.

September/October

. . . time to get some last sowings of winter salads and greens in the ground, and think about ways of protecting crops over the winter. Cloches, mini-tunnels and fleece are all useful ways of extending the season.



Outside

- Spring cabbage (early September, warmer areas only)
- Winter salads and greens including winter lettuce and oriental vegetables
- Bunching onions (early September)
- Broad beans and hardy (round seeded) peas to overwinter (from mid September)

In a polytunnel or greenhouse border

- Hardy oriental greens, particularly mustard greens, komatsuna, mizuna, Tsoi Sim and chinese cabbage.

November/December

. . . ideal months for tidying up the garden, sorting out your compost heaps and getting everything in order for the new year.

Outside

- Plant garlic, choosing the biggest cloves to get the best results
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