



**Aylett Nurseries**  
*The Complete Garden Centre*

# Vegetables

**Information Leaflet No. 36**



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# ***Grow Your Own...***

***GROW AND EAT YOUR OWN DELICIOUS  
VEGETABLES  
AND YOU CAN BE FITTER AND HEALTHIER!  
ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF FRESH AIR  
AND EXERCISE.***

The choice is yours, whether you grow a few in part of the garden, or have a large vegetable plot or allotment. There is a wide range, and you can have fun choosing and growing your own produce. The crops can be harvested at the peak of their flavour, tenderness and nutritional value, and you will save money too!

A well run vegetable plot will use a crop rotation system to reduce the risk of soil troubles and nutritional in balance. A simple three year plan works well, e.g.

<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2</b>	<b>YEAR 3</b>
Brassicas	Roots	Others
Others	Brassicas	Roots
Roots	Others	Brassicas

**BRASSICAS** - Broccoli, Brussel Sprout, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Kale, Radish, Swede and Turnip.

**ROOTS** - Beetroot, Carrot, Chicory, Parsnip and Potato.

**OTHERS** - Bean, Capsicum, Celeriac, Courgette, Celery, Cucumber, Leaf Beet, Leek, Lettuce, Marrow, Onion, Pea, Spinach, Sweetcorn and Tomato.

**ASPARAGUS** - A luxury vegetable raised from rooted plants ("crowns"). Grow in their own bed and weed by hand to protect their shallow roots. Provide protection from strong winds. Apply a general fertilizer each spring. Harvest mid-late spring, from the second year after planting.

**AUBERGINE** - Best grown under glass but can be grown outside in a warm sheltered position. Stake and tie in plants as they grow, remove the tip from the main stem when plants are 30cm tall. Mist foliage regularly (twice daily) with tepid water to discourage red spider mite and to help set fruit. Harvest summer.

**BEANS – Protect seedlings from slugs and snails. Birds may also strip leaves from young seedlings, use netting or chicken wire to protect them.**

**BROAD** - Easy to grow. Water as plants begin to flower and two weeks later, otherwise only water in periods of drought. Harvest mid summer-autumn.

**DWARF - FRENCH** - Easy to grow. Water well during periods of dry weather. Protect from late cold snaps with fleece or newspaper. Harvest late summer Autumn. Pick the pods regularly to prolong harvest period. The dried beans are called Haricots.

**RUNNER** - Easy to grow, best in warm areas. Needs support. Ensure soil is constantly moist, mulch in June. Mist foliage and flowers especially in hot and dry weather to help flowers set. Harvest late summer-autumn. Pick the pods regularly to prolong the harvest period.

**BEETROOT** – Require fertile conditions. Easy to grow. Thin out at 10cm intervals. Use a nitrogen fertilizer if not growing strongly. Harvest early summer-autumn.

**BROCCOLI** – Prolific and hardy. Protect from birds when heads are forming. Add a nitrogen fertilizer when plants are about 20cm tall. Harvest February to April.

**BRUSSEL SPROUTS** – position in a sheltered, sunny site protected from strong winds. Add organic matter and general purpose fertilizer before planting or sowing. Plants will benefit from a top-dressing of a high nitrogen fertilizer in July. Harvest autumn-spring. 'Earthing up' encourages sturdier plants.

**CABBAGE** - An excellent all year round vegetable, divided into two main types.

1) Summer, autumn and winter. Harvest July - December.

2) Spring. Harvest January onwards.

Wait until have five or six leaves before transplanting, setting the lowest leaves at ground level. Water young plants being transplanted well. Generous watering when the heads begin to form will greatly improve head size.

**CAPSICUM** (Sweet Pepper) - Best under glass, but can be grown outdoors in a sunny, sheltered position. Pinch out growing tips when they are about 20cm tall to encourage bushiness, water regularly. Feed with a high potash liquid fertilizer once the first fruit has set.

**CARROTS** – Best grown in open ground but short rooted varieties may do well in containers. Drought resistant, seldom needs watering. Sow thinly to reduce need to thin

out. Avoid crushing the foliage when thinning out as this attract carrot fly. A 60cm high barrier can be used to exclude the low flying female carrot fly. Over feeding or stoney soil can lead to the roots 'forking'. Harvest March – October.

**CAULIFLOWER** – Requires a rich soil and plenty of moisture. Water young plants well before and after transplanting out, plant deeply so that the lowest leaves are at ground level and firm the soil very well against the roots. Use a high Nitrogen fertiliser to boost growth. Harvest June – October.

**CELERY**- Needs a rich soil and plenty of water throughout the growing season. Ensure plants are properly 'hardened off' (acclimatised to outdoor conditions) before planting out at the end of May to early June. If not, celery is liable to bolt or run to flower and seed if shocked or chilled during transplanting or growth. Earth up (mounding soil around the stems) to blanch the stems once stems are 30cm tall, drawing up the soil 7.5cm (3in) at a time until the top is exposed. Harvest mid-summer onwards.

**COURGETTE** – Needs a rich soil. Keep the soil moist, water the roots rather than over the plant. Pick regularly to prolong cropping. Harvest July – September.

**CUCUMBER** – Needs to be kept well watered, keep the soil constantly moist by watering around the plants – not over them.

INDOOR - Train up a vertical wire or cane, pinching out the growing point when it reaches the top. Pinch out the tips of sideshoots two leaves beyond a female flower (recognisable by tiny fruits behind flower). Feed every 2 weeks with a balanced liquid fertiliser.

OUTDOOR – Needs a rich soil in full sun, add lots of organic matter and a general purpose fertiliser before sowing/planting. Pinch out the growing tip when the plants have developed seven leaves. Don't remove the male flowers.

**KALE** – Needs a rich soil with plenty of organic matter and plenty of moisture in a cool position. Feed with a nitrogen fertiliser.

**LEAF BEET** – Also called 'Chard'. Needs a well-drained soil and gives a greater yield in a sunny position. Best in a permanent position. Benefits from regular watering and feeding with a high nitrogen fertiliser.

**LETTUCE** – Comes in a range of leaf shapes and colours. Needs a well-drained, reasonably fertile soil in sun or part shade. Fast maturing, so best sown or planted a few at a time at regular intervals, or plant in patches for 'cut and come again' varieties. Harvest as required.

**LEEK** –Transplant in June when they are about 20cm (8in) high and the thickness of a pencil. Prepare the plants by trimming off the root tips to 1cm long. Make a deep hole with your dibber and drop in. Avoid backfilling the planting hole with soil, just let the water settle the soil around the roots. Will need watering in prolonged dry spells. Harvest October – March.

**MARROW** – Needs a rich soil, add lots of organic matters and a general purpose fertiliser before sowing/planting. Keep the soil constantly moist by watering around the plants not over them. A 15cm pot sunk alongside the plant can be used as a water reservoir. After

the first fruits start to swell, feed every 2 weeks with a high potash liquid fertiliser. Support the fruits on a piece of tile or glass. You will need approx 1.2m<sup>2</sup> per plant.

**ONION** – Need a sunny, sheltered site on a well-drained soil. Avoid planting on freshly-manured ground as this can lead to rotting. Best suited for growing in the open ground, but may cope with large, deep containers or raised beds. Not suitable for growbags. Harvest spring – late summer.

**PARSNIP** – Require little maintenance. Thin out to leave one seedling per 15cm (6in) station. Keep the soil evenly moist to avoid splitting. A good plant to grow as a first crop in newly dug soil. The deep roots help to break up the soil. Roots dislike disturbance once planted. Harvest October – February.

**PEA** – Requires moist conditions throughout the growing season. Water well when the flowering begins and regularly after. Check the soil moisture at root level to find out if the plants are getting enough water. Applying a thick mulch around the base of plants after watering can preserve soil moisture. Taller varieties will need support. Pick regularly.

**POTATO** – Essential to chit earlies seed tubers (advisable with maincrops) before planting. Plant first earlies around late March, second earlies early to mid-April and maincrops mid- to late April. Keep crops well watered in dry weather; the critical time is once the tubers start to form. A liquid feed of a balanced general fertiliser every fortnight can help increase yields. See our separate Potato leaflet for more detailed information. A good first crop for freshly dug ground as roots help to break up the soil.

**RADISH** – Needs moist soil to keep the roots fleshy and tasty and to prevent splitting, especially summer sowings. Winter cultivars should be thinned to 15cm apart. Sowing summer cultivars thinly (approximately 2.5cm/1in apart) helps to remove need for thinning. Sow at regular intervals and harvest regularly.

**SPINACH** – Needs watering in dry periods. Thin seedlings to 7.5cm (3in) apart. Protect winter cultivars from October onwards with cloches or cover with fleece having protected the crown with straw or similar material. When harvesting pick every alternative plant.

**SWEDE** – Needs moist soil and a cool location, this helps to prevent cracking and corky growth and powdery mildew. Thin out the seedlings when large enough to handle, leaving plants 23cm apart.

**SWEETCORN** – Sow or plant in blocks to ensure effective wind pollination. Position in full sun and with some protection from strong winds. Seeds are best sown in biodegradable pots to minimise any root disturbance when planting out. Harvest August to September.

**TOMATO** – Transfer to 23cm pots, grow bags or plant 45-60cm (18-24in) apart outside when the flowers of the first truss are beginning to open; plants for growing outdoors should be hardened off first. Support the main stem with a vertical bamboo cane or well-anchored sturdy string. Remove the sideshoots regularly when they are about 2.5cm (1in) long. (Varieties grown as bush or hanging basket types do not need supports or to have sideshoots removed). Feed every 2 weeks with a balanced liquid fertiliser, changing to a high potash one once the first fruits start to set. Remove yellowing leaves below developing fruit trusses. Keep plants evenly moist to prevent fruit cracking.

**TURNIP** – Needs watering in dry periods to prevent roots becoming small and woody. Thin out to 15cm apart for early crops or 23cm apart for maincrops. Prevent cabbage root fly and flea beetle by growing under insect-proof mesh or horticultural fleece. Feed with a nitrogen-rich fertiliser.

The seed catalogues offer a selection of more unusual vegetables. Why not experiment and try something different for a change? Here are a few suggestions:

**CELERIAC** - Requires similar treatment to celery, but no need to earth up. Eat raw, grated in salads, or cooked as a hot vegetable. Harvest autumn.

**CHICORY** - Plump leafy heads. Useful vegetable for winter salads. Harvest October - March.

**CORN SALAD** (Lamb's Lettuce) - Particularly useful in winter and spring salads if late sowings protected by cloches. Harvest June - March.

**ENDIVE** - A curly-leaved salad vegetable. Popular in France. Harvest July - December.

**KOHL RABI** - A delicate flavoured vegetable similar to turnip. Good raw grated or as a hot vegetable. Harvest June - December.

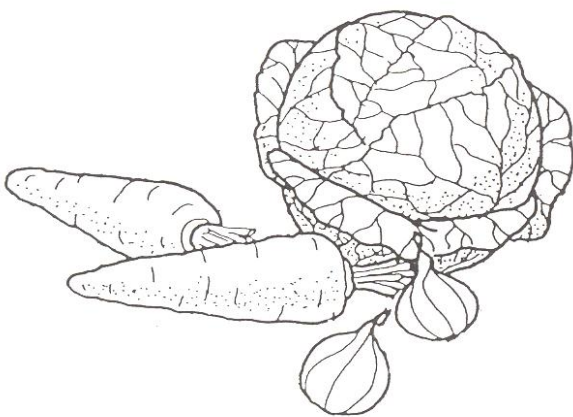
**PAK CHOI** - An oriental vegetable. One of the ingredients of chow mein. Harvest summer - winter.

**RADICCHIO** - An unusual and distinctive crop, popular on the continent. Attractive red leaves. Add colour and flavour to salads. Harvest autumn.

**SALSIFY** - Flavour said to resemble oysters. An interesting winter vegetable. Can be left in the ground or lifted and stored. Harvest October - February.

**SCORZONERA** - Unusual black skinned root vegetable. Harvest October - April.

**SWISS CHARD** - Use the leaves as spinach and cook the fleshy mid-ribs. Serve crisp with butter. Harvest July - October.



**This leaflet is available in  
alternative formats**

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