

## VEGETABLE GROWING IN THE COMMUNAL AREAS OF STRATHKINNESS COMMUNITY GARDEN

It possible to have a good selection of different vegetables and salad most of the year. The calendar below shows how this can be achieved by careful selection of sowing and planting times, taking note of the weather for any month and using both the prepared outside ground or the protection of the polytunnel.

### STRATHKINNESS COMMUNITY GARDEN SOW/PLANT CALENDAR

VEG	SOW	LOCATION	PLANT	HARVEST	COMMENT
Salad leaves Carrots Spring onions Leeks	Mid Feb and August for winter salad	Polytunnel, in cold winter could delay sowing to early March	June to August for leeks outside	April to June  Nov to March	Lettuce spinach Coriander mustard mizuna Chinese violet cress+ many more
Peas	End Feb End April	Cold Glass Direct	Mid April Ground	June July Aug Sept	Beware mice All stages
Early brassicas Celariac	Earlymarch February	Cold glass	Early May	End June winter	Crop protection
Broad beans beetroot	Feb	Cold glass	Mid April Ground	July Aug	Pots Cell trays
Tomatoes Chilli	March January	Heated prop. windowsill	End May Cold glass	July to October	Cold sensitive Watering
Courgette Squash corn	End March	Heated prop Windowsill	End May Ground	July to October	Care late frost
Potato	Buy Feb, chit	Ground	Second week April	End June to October	Care May frost cover/earth up
Shallots. Onion sets		Ground	March April	June August	Care drying for store
Brassicas	Mid to end April	Cold glass pots prick out, grow on polytunnel	June to July Ground after garlic	September to April	Delay for crops to overwinter
Runner/French beans	Mid April	Cold glass pots	Begin June ground	End July to October	Hazel sticks beware May frost

Main outdoor sowing carrot Beetroot parsnip salad fennel mooli Radicchio	3 <sup>rd</sup> week April  June- July	Ground but adjust for season. Protect carrot fly	Leeks can replace garlic early potatoes	Summer to Winter	Include another leek sowing for later crop Succession sowing
Salad leaves Veg	Beginning August	Polytunnel		All winter to May	Same as end Feb sowing + pak Choi radicchio parsley lambs lettuce
garlic		Tunnel ground	October	June	Plant when tender lifted see note below
Yakon	Tuber March	Unheated glasshouse	End May	November	Careful tuber store see note below

**GARLIC** has certain cultivation requirements to achieve the best bulbs that keep through the Winter. We choose the largest and best-looking bulbs from the previous harvest (invariably from the polytunnel crop) for planting out in the second week of October in the polytunnel and outside ground in rows 12” apart with cloves 6” apart. Each area should be well composted and each clove planted to a depth of approximately 5 cm. The green shoots appear six weeks later and the crop is weeded. From March of the following year the garlic is fed with our comfrey fertiliser weekly initially and then twice weekly from May. The plants are not allowed to seed and if seed heads form (called scapes) these are removed and can be used in the kitchen. Rust may form on the leaves but this is rarely a problem. The garlic bulbs are harvested when the green leaves have faded to brown which is usually from mid June to early July with the polytunnel crop harvested first. Leeks or other later crops as in the plan above can fill the outside ground vacated by the garlic. In the polytunnel we like to plant French beans in the ground or use the space for winter salad. The lifted crop is carefully dried in dry shed or glasshouse with the best separated for the October planting, the remainder going to our gardeners.

When thinking of buying garlic to grow there are different types to try: hard-neck, soft-neck and elephant. Ours originally came from a shop

and has been grown on each year for the past 12 years by selecting the best.

**YAKON** is an interesting South American root vegetable that can be eaten raw or cooked for example in a stir fry where it has a crunchy water chestnut flavour. Another name is **Poire de Terre** as some think it has a pear flavour. It is a late crop harvested when the first frosts in the late Autumn blacken the leaves that are by then on 2 metre stems. At harvest the root has two parts: lots of oval tubers that can be stored in a dry, cool frost free building until ready to use, and a crown that is kept until next year. The dried crown can be stored like dahlia tubers and we store them surrounded by dryish potting compost again in a cool frost free building. In April the crowns can be inspected and any soft parts discarded. We then look for the swollen growing buds and separate the crown into segments each with at least two growth points. These segments can then be individually potted on with green leaves showing during May. The yakon is then planted in the well composted bed in late May/ June with the location chosen bearing in mind the 2 metre height of each plant which should be given plenty of space e.g. 50 cm. apart in each direction. Well worth a try.

**SEED STORAGE** Some seeds can be stored carefully in a cool dry place to be used in future years. The table below gives some approximate estimates for some of the common vegetable varieties.

It's also easy and worthwhile to collect seeds from plants in the garden. A paper bag is a good way to collect and store these seeds. Beans and peas are particularly easy to save.

## **AGE OF SEEDS FOR GERMINATION**

• <b>Onion</b>	<b>1 year</b>
• <b>Parsley</b>	<b>1 year</b>
• <b>Parsnip</b>	<b>1 year</b>
• <b>Sweet corn</b>	<b>2 years</b>
• <b>Leek</b>	<b>2 years</b>
• <b>Spinach</b>	<b>2 years</b>
• <b>Beans</b>	<b>3 years</b>
• <b>Carrot</b>	<b>3 years</b>
• <b>Peas</b>	<b>3 years</b>
• <b>Beet</b>	<b>4 years</b>
• <b>Broccoli</b>	<b>4 years</b>
• <b>Cabbage</b>	<b>4 years</b>
• <b>Lettuce</b>	<b>4 years</b>
• <b>Kale</b>	<b>4 years</b>
• <b>Radish, Squash &amp; Tomato</b>	<b>5 years</b>
• <b>Melon, Cucumber &amp; Basil</b>	<b>5 years</b>

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE GARDEN**

**As we have gardeners and visitors of all ages including the very young it is important that we have a robust Health and Safety culture. An example is the numerous glass houses that present a danger relating to the horticultural glass. We have signage as below and take particular precautions during our Open Days when there are lots of children present. We have comprehensive risk assessment documents and checklists available on this website for all our Community Trust activities.**

## Glasshouse sign



## ART AND CRAFTWORK IN THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

During 2024 Kirsty Lockhart from Dundee has visited the CommunityGarden throughout the seasons drawing and painting the changing landscape. We like to encourage art and craft in any form in the garden. Bob Bilson has installed his fused glass in various locations. Here are examples from both Kirsty and Bob.



