

# Four season



# vegetable gardening

**We can help you select vegetables to grow and plant at the perfect time, to eat year-round.**

Of all gardening activities, growing and harvesting fresh vegetables for the kitchen is one of the most rewarding. No matter the size of your garden, with careful planning it is possible to grow a range of vegetables to provide near continuous supply.

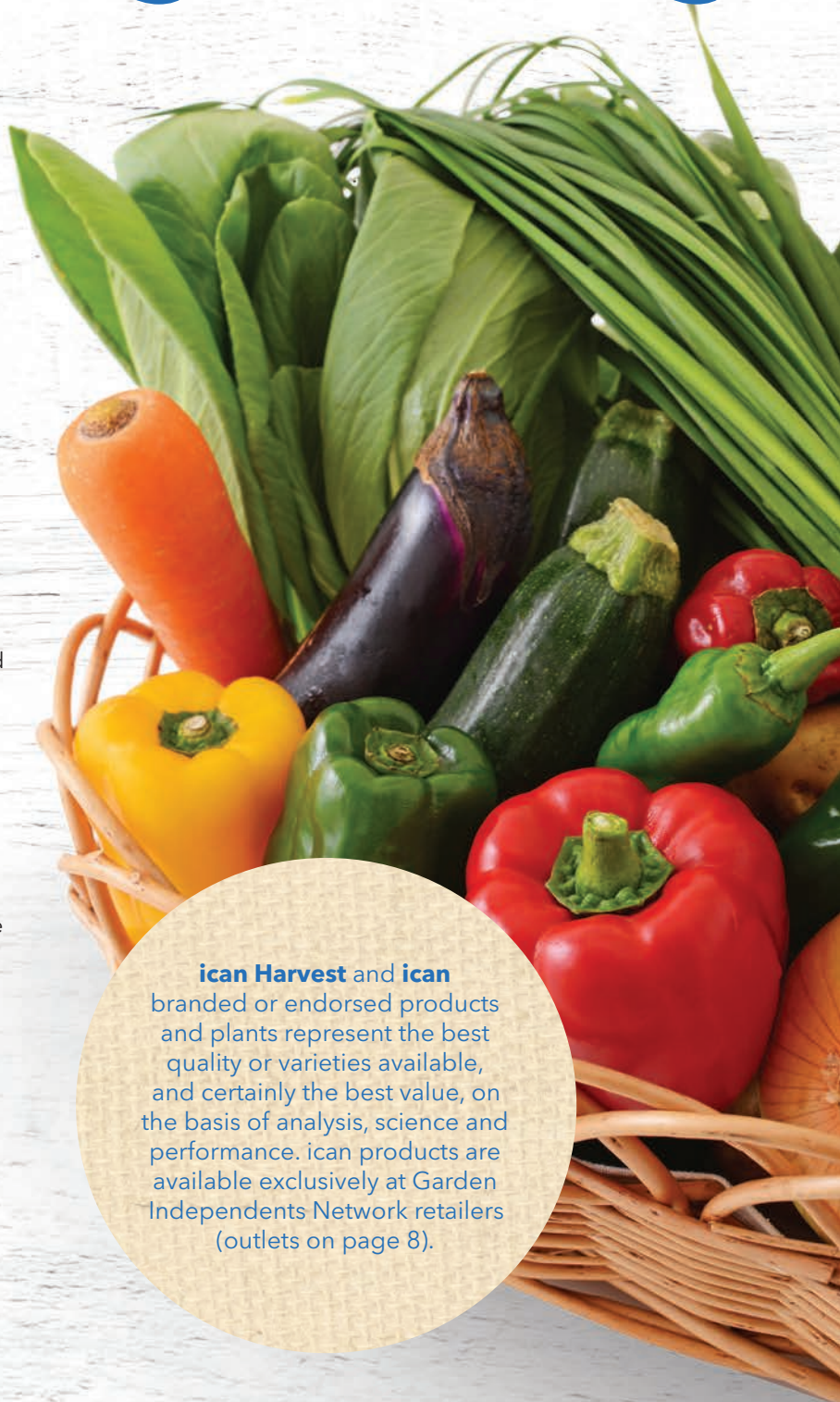
All vegetables should be grown quickly. The perfect garden site has a water supply, and is sunny and sheltered with moist, free-draining soil that can be dug to create a loose crumbly structure. Of these factors, sunshine is the most important, as shelter and perfect soil can be solved with windbreaks, plenty of compost, and a little digging.

Raised beds offer a solution to poor soil and can be positioned anywhere for best sun and shelter. And if your garden is small or unsuitable, you can grow vegetables in containers.

Vegetables always need water to maintain growth. For some vegetables, not enough water may cause them to 'bolt' meaning they start to flower and set seed at the expense of the crop we want to harvest. Newly planted vegetables should not dry out as they establish.

Some vegetables require a lot of space, others can only be grown during certain months. But we all have favourites so start by deciding what you want to grow from the space you have and start planning and planting.

As your local Garden Independents Network (GIN) garden centre, we can help you plan, plant, and harvest your own home-grown vegetables year-round!



**ican Harvest** and **ican** branded or endorsed products and plants represent the best quality or varieties available, and certainly the best value, on the basis of analysis, science and performance. ican products are available exclusively at Garden Independents Network retailers (outlets on page 8).



**Find more ican products and advice at your local ican retailer – see page 8.**

# Sowing, Planting & Harvesting Guide

Plant and harvest fresh vegetables every month of the year

**Key:**

- Sow seed in pots
- Sow seed in garden or plant seedlings
- Sow seed in garden
- Sprout (chit) seed
- Plant slips (rooted cuttings)
- \*Plant crowns
- \*\*Plant bulbs
- Harvest
- Harvest with succession planting
- Harvest (after 2 years)

		VEGETABLE	WE RECOMMEND ICAN SEED	GOOD IN CONTAINERS	PLANTS FOR FAMILY OF 4	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
WARM SEASON VEGETABLES	Beans climbing			✓	20												
	Beans dwarf	<b>Supreme</b>		✓	30 to 50												
	Capsicum (pepper)			✓	3 to 4												
	Chilli			✓	1												
	Cucumber	<b>Prolific Mini</b>		✓	4 to 6												
	Eggplant (aubergine)			✓	4 to 6												
	Kumara				18 to 24												
	Melons				2 to 3												
	Pumpkins & squash	<b>Buttercup Dry Delight</b>			3 to 6												
	Sweet corn	<b>Tender Sweet</b>			20 to 24												
	Tomatoes	<b>Flavoursome</b>		✓	12 to 15												
	Zucchini (courgettes)	<b>Leader</b>		✓	3 to 6												
INTERMEDIATE SEASON VEGETABLES	Asian greens			✓	6 to 9												
	Asparagus				15 to 20												
	Beetroot	<b>Red Lightning</b>		✓	30												
	Carrots	<b>Europa</b>		✓	120												
	Celery				6 to 8												
	Leeks	<b>Baby</b>			20 to 30												
	Lettuce	<b>Trendsetter</b>		✓	9 to 12												
	Parsnips	<b>Trafalgar</b>			20 to 30												
	Radish	<b>Olympus</b>		✓	20												
	Silverbeet			✓	9 to 12												
	Spinach	<b>Nutriplus</b>		✓	12 to 15												
	Spring onions			✓	50												
COOL SEASON VEGETABLES	Broad beans	<b>Mr Green Seed</b>			30												
	Broccoli				6 to 9												
	Brussels sprouts				6 to 9												
	Cabbage				6 to 9												
	Cauliflower				6 to 9												
	Garlic				12 to 15												
	Onions				50 to 60												
	Peas	<b>Magic</b>		✓	100												
	Potatoes			✓	50 to 60												
	Shallots			✓	12 to 15												
Swedes & turnips				30 to 40													

**Notes** This calendar serves as a guide to the planting seasons. In the regions, you may sow and plant earlier or later depending on your climate. If you have a greenhouse, you can start sowing and planting two to four weeks earlier.

\* a crown is the base of a plant that has roots and shoots. When planted, they develop into full-sized plants.  
 \*\* garlic and shallots are grown from bulbs which are the same as the edible part.



# How to decide which vegetables to grow

## Consider these factors when choosing what to grow.

### 1 How much space do you have?

Larger vegetables such as tomatoes, sweet corn, and potatoes, require a space where they can grow without shading or smothering smaller plants. Smaller vegetables eg carrots, dwarf beans, lettuce, can grow together in a small plot or potager style in the flower garden. Consider growing your vegetables in containers if your garden is small - it's fun!

### 2 What vegetables do you like?

Plant what your family most wants to eat. For example, if the kids don't like broad beans, use the space for peas instead. Consider what you enjoy-is it the success of picking your own sun-ripened tomatoes, or digging a root of new potatoes? Involve the family in deciding which vegetables to plant. Children get real enjoyment from picking and eating something they have grown.

### 3 What grows in the different seasons in your region?

The vegetables we enjoy in summer eg. tomatoes, sweet corn, dwarf beans and cucumbers, are regular favourites and are easy to grow during the warmer months, even in southern regions. Crops that are more tolerant of or prefer cooler temperatures, can often be grown all year in most regions of New Zealand.

### 4 When are they ready to harvest?

It can be tempting to plant a whole garden of vegetables at Labour Weekend but you'll end up with a glut of vegetables ready to eat just as you head off on holiday. Instead, plant or sow a small number of each kind of vegetable every few weeks. This is called succession planting and will spread the crops over time so they are manageable and always available fresh to enjoy.

Your decision on what to grow will be influenced by the space you have, the season they grow in and what you enjoy growing and harvesting yourself rather than buying at the supermarket.

**Ask our team in store for the best crops to grow in your area and when to plant them.**



The vegetable groups

## The vegetable groups

**1 Fruit & seed vegetables** include peas, beans, capsicum, eggplant (aubergine), tomatoes, sweet corn, cucumbers, zucchinis, and pumpkins. These vegetables prefer a balanced fertiliser with a higher rate of potassium (K) to promote flower and fruit growth. Peas and beans are best grown from seed sown directly in the soil; the others are better planted as seedlings.

**2 Root vegetables** include carrots, beetroot, radish, onions, parsnip, and potatoes. These vegetables prefer a balanced fertiliser with a higher rate of phosphorous (P) for strong root growth. Grow them from seed planted directly into the soil as they dislike having their roots disturbed if transplanted.

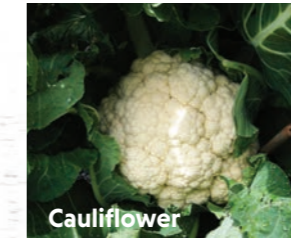
**3 Leafy vegetables** include spinach, silver beet, celery, lettuce, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, kale, broccoli, and cauliflower (even though we eat the flowers of the latter two). These vegetables prefer a balanced fertiliser with a higher rate of nitrogen (N). They are best grown from seedlings planted directly into the soil.



Tomatoes

## Cool and warm season vegetables

Many vegetables are seasonal and will not succeed if planted out of season. For example, many of the fruit & seed vegetables require the warmth of summer to flower and fruit. Many leafy vegetables prefer cooler temperatures and summer's heat will see them bolt.



Cauliflower

**1 Cool season vegetables** include Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli (brassicas); broad beans, peas, onions, and spinach. They can be sown and planted during the cooler months and will often tolerate frost.



Bean Supreme

**2 Warm season vegetables** include dwarf and climbing beans; capsicums and chillies; tomatoes and eggplant; pumpkins, cucumbers, and zucchini (cucurbits); and sweet corn. The soil temperature needs to be above 15°C for germination and growth, and temperatures above 20°C are required for flowering and cropping.



Root vegetables

**3 Intermediate season vegetables** grow best in temperatures ranging from 15 to 25°C, and include beetroot, carrots, celery, leeks, lettuce, parsnip, radish, and silver beet. It is important to plant them at the correct time of year as they will bolt if sown too early or too late.

Choosing the right varieties and planting at the right time will provide you with vegetables to feed the family. See the sowing and planting calendar in this brochure.

## We Recommend

### ican 'Chef's Best' Vegetable Seeds

Our garden gurus have carried out trials and sought advice from vegetable seed experts in NZ and internationally to find the very best of each vegetable variety.

#### The vegetables in the ican seed range have

- superior taste
- improved pest and disease resistance
- increased vigour and yield
- are consistent and reliable

A number of the varieties are also more compact, and faster maturing, providing the potential to produce more crops through the season. **If the vegetable you want to grow is in the ican 'Chef's Best' range, that is the one to sow!**



ican vegetable seeds

Other ican seed varieties include Broad Beans 'Mr Green Seed', Dwarf Bean 'Supreme', Courgette 'Leader', Cucumber 'Prolific Mini', Leek 'Baby', Lettuce 'Trendsetter', Parsnip 'Trafalgar', Radish 'Olympus', and Spinach 'Nutriplus'.



Potatoes



Vegetable seedlings



Punnets of seedlings ready to plant

## How to grow vegetables in your garden

### Making best use of your space

Consider these points when you plan your vegetable plot:

1. How much space does this crop need?
2. How tall does it grow?
3. How long will it be growing in that space?
4. Was this crop grown in the same space last year?

Potatoes, zucchini, pumpkins, sweet corn, brassicas, broad beans, climbing beans and tomatoes, require space to grow. Rows for these plants should be 80cm to 1m apart. Position tall crops such as tomatoes, climbing beans and sweet corn at the southern end of the plot so they do not shade the smaller crops. Climbing beans will need a fence or teepee for support.

Dwarf beans, lettuces, carrots, spinach, beetroot, and silver beet can be grown together in a separate plot which could be a raised bed. Grow these in short rows of 1 to 1.2m, 40 to 50 cm apart.

Long-standing vegetables such as brassicas, celery, onions, and parsnips, will be in the garden for a few months so plan the space for them around the other crops you wish to grow.

A space saving technique is to introduce vegetables into the ornamental garden, potager style. Plant hedges of sweet corn, or climbing beans on an obelisk, blocks of lettuce, carrots, onions, and cabbages for contrasting foliage. Try novelty vegetables such as multi-coloured silver beet and yellow tomatoes.

If space allows, crop rotation, that is growing different crops in different plots each year, will minimise the build-up of soil fungal diseases, and lessen nutrient depletion of the soil.

### Prepare your soil

The better your soil, the more successful your vegetable garden will be. Whatever soil you are starting with, it can be improved with the addition of organic matter (compost and leaf mould), manures, and if clay-based, with gypsum to break up the clay particles. If you are growing in a raised garden bed, fill it with quality compost and planting mix. We recommend **ican Premium Compost** and **ican Premium Planting Mix**.

If your site has poor drainage, plant into raised mounds or raised beds that will drain easily and be warmer to plant into. For most vegetables, including root crops, a raised garden or soil dug to the depth of 30 to 35cm is perfect. Your soil should be loose and crumbly so it is well-aerated and free draining but can also absorb and hold moisture, so it doesn't dry out during summer.

Each new growing season, renew the soil by working-in lime and generous quantities of compost and **ican Real Blood & Bone**.

### We Recommend

Give your vegetables a real boost with **ican Real Blood and Bone**. It is high in Nitrogen and perfect to mix in the soil when planting seedlings and to feed leafy greens.

**ican 100% Organic Vegetable Food** is perfectly balanced to naturally feed your vegetable plants once they are growing. It will enhance the flavour and yield of your crops, improve your garden soil and encourage earthworm activity. Use after planting and throughout the growing season.



ican Real Blood & Bone

### When and how do you plant?

Spring is the traditional start to the vegetable growing season; however, exercise caution. The soil will be cold from the long winter, and overnight frosts are possible. During late winter and early spring, only plant vegetables that will tolerate the cold and can be protected from frost eg potatoes, broad beans, peas and brassicas.

Give more tender plants a head start by sowing seeds in trays on a windowsill or in a greenhouse, for planting out when night temperatures stay above 10°C. Some seeds, such as dwarf and climbing beans, will only germinate if the soil temperature is above 16°C, and tomato seedlings planted too early outside in cold weather will not thrive.

#### Sowing seed:

Work the soil until it is well dug and free from lumps. Create a furrow at the recommended planting depth and sow the seed at the recommended spacing. The back of the seed packet provides this information. Cover the seeds with fine soil and firm down to settle the seeds in. Water the row with a fine shower or mist from the hose or watering can. If sowing very small seed eg. carrots, radishes & parsnips, thin out the seedlings to the required spacing when they have a couple of pairs of leaves.

#### Planting seedlings:

Plant your seedlings into the prepared garden bed in the cooler part of the day - early morning or evening. Dig a small hole and then place seedlings in gently to minimise root disturbance and keep as much soil around the roots as possible. Firm the soil in around the roots so the plant is well supported but the leaves are not buried. Water gently but thoroughly to settle them in.

Plant a punnet of seedlings or sow fresh seed, every few weeks for continuous harvest (succession planting).

#### TIPS:

1. Soaking larger seeds for an hour or so in tepid water before sowing can speed up germination.
2. After sowing dwarf and climbing bean seed, water well only once until they have appeared above ground.
3. Protect emerging seedlings with a slug and snail bait.
4. Plant tomato seedlings deep - the stem and first set of leaves should be buried under the soil. Roots will grow from the buried stem to anchor the plant
5. Plant winter crops such as parsnips, leeks, and Brussels sprouts in summer so they are a good size before cooler temperatures slow growth.



ican 100% Organic Vegetable Food

### Feeding your garden

Most vegetables will be adequately fed by the fertiliser applied during soil preparation, but you can boost the growth of leaves and flowers by watering with liquid **ican Fast Food** and with side dressings of **ican 100% Organic Vegetable Food**.

#### What is NPK?

The letters N, P, and K represent the elements Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium, the three key 'macro-nutrients' needed by plants to thrive. A bag of fertiliser will display these letters followed by a number which represents the percentage of each nutrient in the fertiliser. Other 'micro-nutrients' may also be displayed, for example, Magnesium (Mg), Manganese (Mn), Sulphur (S) and Iron (Fe). This information is useful to compare different products and to choose the right fertiliser to feed your plants.

### Watering your garden

To grow quickly, vegetables always need adequate water. New seedlings and freshly sown seed should be watered only to keep them moist not wet. When your plants are established, water deeply to encourage the roots down into the soil. Avoid using overhead sprinklers, as the wet leaves encourage disease. Soaker hoses or handheld nozzles directed at the soil are better.

## How to grow vegetables in containers

Many vegetables do really well in containers. By following the basic principles of growing vegetables in a garden, and picking the right plants, you can grow a fair amount of food in just a few large pots! One of the best things about container growing is the pots can be moved from one place to another, to give the plants the best micro-climate and show them off when they're looking their best! To get started, find a sunny spot to place your containers and choose a few different vegetables that you and your family like to eat.

### Containers

Use the biggest containers you have space for to provide a deep growing medium for your vegetables. Containers with a minimum depth of 40cm are ideal. This will mean you have to water and feed your plants less often, and they're more likely to produce a bigger crop, as they have more space to grow. Tall crops such as tomatoes which require staking, will need containers that are heavier and deeper to minimise the risk of tipping.

The container may be a plastic or pottery pot, grow bag, trough, barrel or bath. It will need to have at least one drainage hole 1-2cm in diameter.

### Potting mix

We recommend you use only the best. The potting mix for vegetables needs to be free draining but also have good water holding capacity. We recommend **ican Premium Potting Mix** which contains slow release food and a wetting agent. Do not use garden soil in pots as it will have weeds and become compacted causing poor drainage and aeration.

### Feeding

Fast growing vegetables use a lot of nutrients and with watering, nutrients can be washed from the pots. Regular (weekly) liquid feeding with **ican Fast Food** will greatly improve your crops health and yields.

### Watering

After planting, water gently but thoroughly to settle the seeds or seedlings. In spring and autumn your containers may require daily watering, and twice daily in summer. Mulching with straw or compost will help the soil retain moisture.

## When to harvest

Bigger isn't always better. Many vegetables can be harvested as soon as they are of a desired size eg potatoes, carrots and beetroot. Some vegetables are at their peak of quality and tenderness when still immature- salad greens, zucchini, beans, peas, and sweet corn for example. Others, like tomatoes, are best picked when they are fully ripe and flavoursome; harvest pumpkins and onions when they are mature enough to be stored. As a general rule, harvest often as picking stimulates the production of more flowers, resulting in higher yields.



**ican Harvest and ican branded or endorsed products and plants are available exclusively from retailers in the Garden Independents Network, a group of innovative and independently owned garden centres across New Zealand.**

Décor Gardenworld, Tauranga  
Touchstone Garden Centre, Gisborne  
Big Jim's Garden Centre, New Plymouth  
Garden Edge, Hawera  
Green Door Garden & Décor, Havelock North  
Springvale Garden Centre, Wanganui  
Harrisons Gardenworld, Feilding  
Harrisons Gardenworld, Waikanae  
Garden Barn, Masterton  
California Home & Garden, Lower Hutt  
Twigland Gardener's World, Wellington  
Terra Viva Home & Garden, Christchurch  
Lushingtons Garden Gift & Café, Ashburton

