

Endive

Good soil is needed. Choose a sunny spot for summer and autumn sown crops. A semi-shaded site is suitable for spring grown endive. Dig in autumn. Incorporate manure or compost if the soil is short of humus. About a week before planting apply a general purpose fertiliser.

Sowing Time

April-August.

Crop Care

Thin the seedlings as soon as the first true leaves appear. Continue thinning at intervals until the plants are 9" apart for curly leaved varieties and 12" apart for broad leaved types. Hoe regularly and feed occasionally with a liquid fertiliser. It is essential to water thoroughly in dry weather – plants will run to seed if this does not happen.

Harvesting

Begin blanching about 12 weeks after sowing. Choose a few plants as required, making sure the leaves are dry. Loosely tie up leaves with raffia and cover with a plastic bucket.

The heads will be ready in 3 weeks (summer) or 5 weeks (winter).

Alternatively for partial blanching, place a plate or cardboard over the centre of the mature plant. The centre should have turned white and be ready for harvesting after about 10 days. Cut the head with a sharp knife when the leaves have turned creamy white.

Note: Only choose a few plants at a time, since they deteriorate rapidly after blanching.



Spinach and Beet Leaf

Requires some soil preparation in order to achieve a good crop. The ground must be rich and contain plenty of organic matter. Apply well-rotted manure, compost or leaf mould to the soil in autumn. The ideal place for summer spinach would be dappled shade between rows of growing vegetables, this will reduce the risk of running into seed. Prepare site and rake in Growmore fertiliser about 2 weeks before sowing time.

Sowing Time

April-May.

Crop Care

The seedlings of summer and winter varieties should be thinned out to 3" apart as soon as they are large enough to handle. A few weeks later remove alternate plants for kitchen use. Hoe to keep down weeds. Water copiously during dry spells in the summer.

Winter varieties will need some sort of protection from October onwards.

Use cloches or straw to cover the plants.

Harvesting

Start picking as soon as the leaves have reached a reasonable size. Always take the outer leaves, which should be young and tender. The secret is to pick continually so that fresh growth is encouraged. Take care when picking. Pick off the leaves with fingernails, don't wrench them off as this could cause damage to the stem.

Note: Young beetroot leaves are also very good in salads. Pick often and as you require. You can also grow Coriander and flat leaved parsley along side your leafy salads.



Grow your own... Leafy Salads

with **Whitehall Garden Centre**

Leafy Salads

- Lettuce
- Chicory
- Corn Salad (Lambs Lettuce)
- Rocket
- Endive
- Spinach & Beet Leaf



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Lettuce

The soil for planting needs to be neutral - alkaline, have adequate organic matter and to be kept moist throughout the life of the crop. Choose a sunny or lightly shaded site. In the autumn or early winter, dig the soil and incorporate compost. Shortly before sowing rake the soil to produce a fine tilth and apply a general fertiliser.

Sowing Time

Can be sown throughout the year. Always read the packet.

Crop Care

Thin the seedlings as soon as the first true leaves appear. Water the day before thinning. Continue thinning at intervals until the plants are 12" apart.

Put slug pellets down and protect plants from birds. Hoe regularly and keep unprotected plants watered. Plants that are undercover should be kept on the dry side. Always try to water in the morning.

Harvesting

Lettuce is ready for cutting, as soon as the firm heart has formed. Test by pressing the heart with the back of your hand. Cut and come again lettuce does not produce a firm heart so it can be cut as and when you need it. Ideally harvest lettuce first thing in the morning.

Loose Leaf

- Salad Bowl
- Red Salad bowl
- Lollo Rosso
- Cancan
- Stealth

Cos

- Lobjoits green
- Paris White
- Little Gem
- Dazzle
- Pandero
- Marshall
- Rusty

Butterhead

- All the Year Round
- Tom Thumb
- Continuity
- Buttercrunch
- Hilde
- Suzan
- Imperial winter
- Musette

Crisp head

- Webbs Wonderful
- Windermere
- Avoncrisp
- Iceberg
- Lakeland
- Jefferson
- Set

Tip

Sow lettuce at 4-6 week intervals so that you can have a good succession of crop for a longer period, especially using the cut and come again varieties. Beet leaves and spinach can also be sown this way and the young leaves used in salads.

Chicory



Chicory is not fussy about soil type. However it does require a sunny spot. Dig the soil in autumn or winter and incorporate compost if the soil is short of humus. Prepare the seed bed a few days before sowing. Rake a general purpose fertiliser into the surface.

Sowing Time

May-June.

Crop Care

Hoe regularly to keep weeds down. Water when the weather is dry. Thin the seedlings to 6" apart (forcing varieties) or 12" apart (non-forcing varieties).

Forcing varieties

Lift parsnip like roots in November. Discard ones that are fanged or less than 1" across at the crown. Cut back leaves to 1" above the crown. Cut roots to a length of 6" and pack them horizontally in a box of sand in a cool shed and keep until required. Force a few at a time between November and March.

Plant about 5 plants into a 9" pot. Surround each root with moist peat or compost, leaving the crown exposed. Cover the pot with an empty larger one, blocking up drainage holes to prevent light. Keep at 50-60 °F to promote chicon formation.

Harvesting

Forcing varieties: The chicons are ready when they reach about 6" high. This will take about 3-4 weeks from the start of forcing. Cut just above the level of the crown.

Water the compost and replace the cover and smaller secondary chicons will then appear.

Non-forcing varieties: Cut heads in late autumn - use immediately or store in a cool shed for later use. Provide some frost protection over plants if they are not to be cut until the winter.

Corn Salad (Lambs Lettuce)

This vegetable will grow happily in nearly all garden soils and situation. Very useful as a winter salad and is grown as an inter or under-cropping vegetables such as winter brassicas. It may be grown as a cut and come again crop or as individual plants. Dig over the soil 2 weeks prior to planting and rake in a general fertiliser.



Sowing Time

Any time between February-September.

Crop Care

Sow thinly in drills ½" deep in drills 6" apart. Thin out regularly so that plants are about 4" apart allow them to mature. Thinnings can be used also. Protect from birds and slugs in the early stages. Corn salad is fairly slow growing, it can take 12 weeks to mature. Ensure that weeds do not compete with it and swamp its growth.

Harvest

Harvest leaves individually or cut across the plants leaving them to re-sprout for a second cut. During winter pick off leaves as you require them. Never strip the stems bare. Before use wash thoroughly to remove grit.

Rocket

Likes cool conditions in fertile moisture retentive soil. Makes a good cut and come again crop for salads. Prepare site by digging over and raking in a general purpose fertiliser.



Sowing Time

April-June.

Crop Care

Sow thinly in rows. When the plants are big enough to handle thin out to 15cm (6") apart. Protect the crop from flea beetles as with the land cress. Water well in periods of dry weather and take off flower shoots as they appear.

Harvest

Should be ready to pick in about 4 weeks. Take off the outer leaves of young plants. Leaves should be soft and tender for salads. If cooking with the plants leave to mature anytime between 4-10 weeks.

Note: Sowing seed little and often can supply you with crops throughout the summer.