

Sweet Corn

Sweet corn requires good drainage and enough humus to ensure the ground remains moist and does not dry out too fast. Ideally it should be slightly acidic, reasonably fertile and deep. Choose a sunny spot, which is sheltered from the wind. Dig site in winter and incorporate compost if the previous years crops were not manured. Rake in some Growmore fertiliser about 2 weeks prior to planting. Sweet corn must be planted in rectangular blocks, not in a single row to enable correct pollination.

Sowing Time

End of May-June.

Crop Care

If birds are a problem protect seedlings with black cotton. Hoe to keep down weeds making sure you do not damage the plants. Water in dry weather, especially during flowering. Stake if plants are tall or site is exposed. Tapping each tassel at the top of the stem during June/July will help pollination. Liquid feed when the cobs begin to swell.

Harvesting

Test cobs for ripeness when the silks turn brown. Pull back part of the sheath and squeeze a couple of grains between thumb and finger. If the liquid is watery its not ready, if the liquid is creamy they are ready to pick.



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.

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

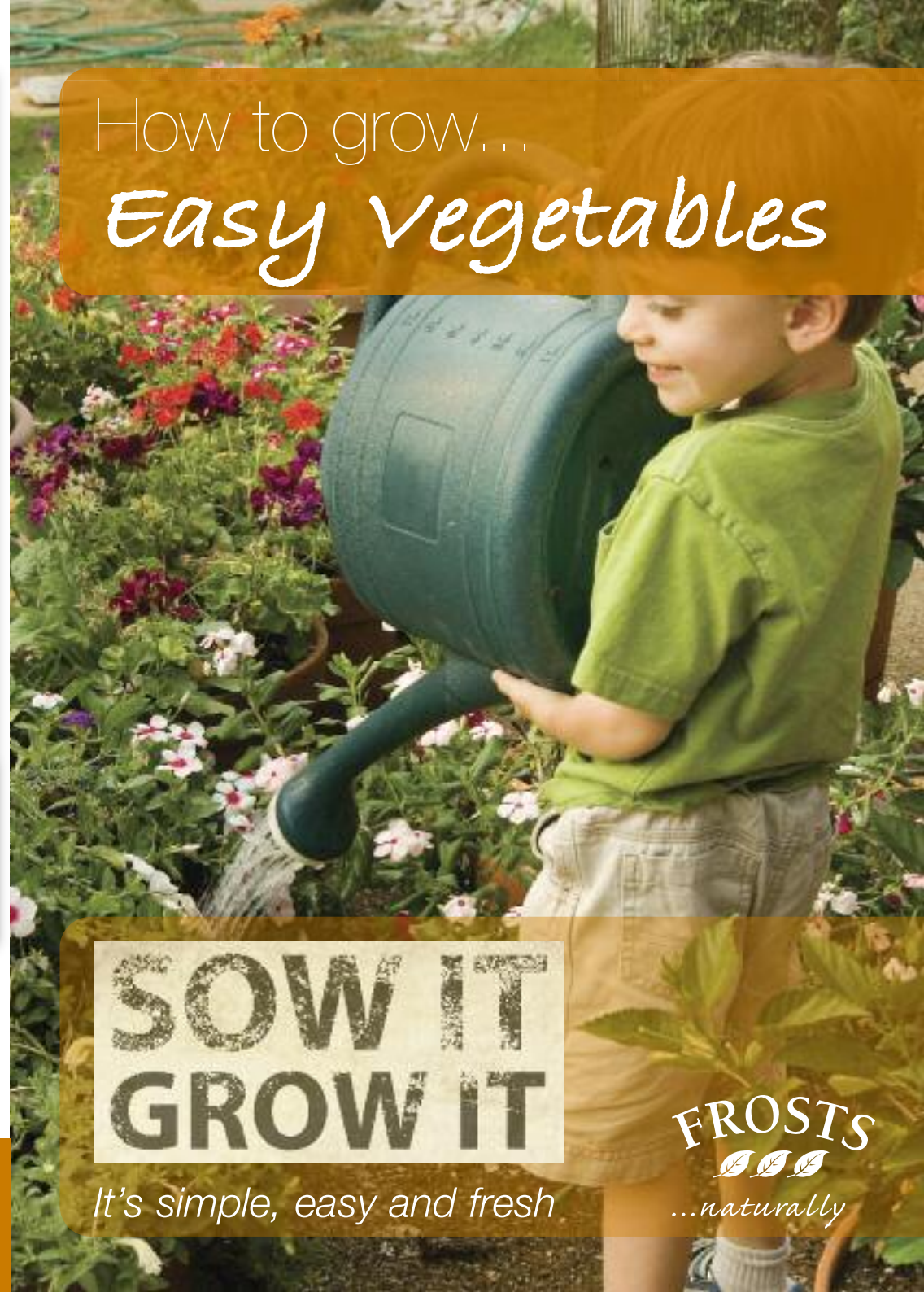
Lettuce is ready for cutting, as soon as the firm heart has formed, test by pressing the heart with the back of your hand. Cut and come again lettuce does not produce a firm heart so it can be cut as and when you need it. Ideally harvest lettuce first thing in the morning.

Tip

Sow lettuce at 4-6 week intervals so that you can have a good succession of crops 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.



How to grow... Easy Vegetables



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It's simple, easy and fresh

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Oxfordshire
01865 391923

Willington
Sandy Road
Willington
Bedford
01234 838777

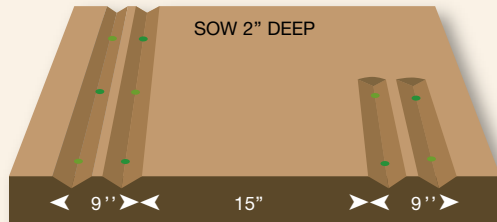
Woburn Sands
Newport Road
Woburn Sands
Milton Keynes
01908 583511

Broad Beans

For best results apply a balanced fertiliser such as Growmore about 1 week before sowing, organic fertiliser, chicken pellets or blood, fish and bone

Sowing Time

Sow from November to March.



Crop Care

Hoe regularly to reduce weeds and water in dry weather. Support will be necessary for tall varieties. Pinch off the top 3" as soon as the first beans start to form.

This will ensure an earlier harvest and also provide some degree of blackfly control. Spray if blackfly persist.

Harvesting

Pick when first pods are 2-3" long.

When cropping has finished dig plants into the soil to provide a valuable green manure.

Potatoes

Potatoes can be grown in practically every soil type. It is ideal to be grown in grasslands or wastelands, which is to be turned into a vegetable plot, earthing up and dense leaf canopy help to clean up new ground.

Choose a sunny spot if possible and avoid frost pockets. Dig the soil in autumn and add compost if the soil was not manured for the previous crop. Do not grow potatoes on land, which has been used for this crop in the past two seasons.

Planting

When you obtain your seed potatoes in February set them out (shoots uppermost) in egg boxes or wooden containers containing 1" dry peat. Store in a light (not sunny) frost-free position and in about 6 weeks there will be several sturdy 1/2"-1" shoots. Do not damage any of these sprouts; chitting is vital for earlies and useful for maincrops.

Tip

Handle seed potatoes with care - do not drop bags on hard surfaces, which may cause bruising. Avoid exposure of seed to frosts and draughts. Potatoes can be grown in almost any container including pots and bags.

Planting time

First Earlies	Second Earlies	Maincrop
Late March	Early-Mid April	Mid-late April

Crop Care

If there is still a danger of frost when the shoots have emerged draw a little soil over them for protection.

When the haulm or stem is about 9" high it is time for earthing up. Use a draw hoe to pile loose soil to make a ridge 6" high.

Water liberally, in dry weather. This is most important once the tubers have started to form.

Harvesting

With earlies wait until the flowers or buds wither. Then carefully remove soil from a small part of the ridge and examine the tubers.

They are ready for harvesting when they are the size of a hen's egg. Insert the fork into the ridge well away from the haulm. Lift the roots forward into the trench.

With maincrops for storage, cut off the withered stems, remove them and wait for 10 days. Then lift the roots and let the tubers dry out for several hours. Then place them into a wooden box and store them in a dark frost-free room or shed, where they should keep until spring.

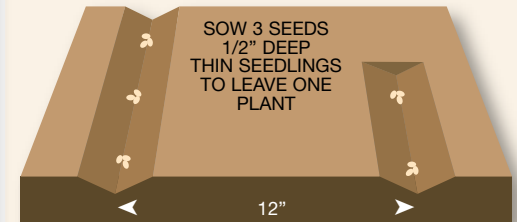
Courgettes & Marrow



Needs a sunny spot protected from strong winds. The soil must be well-drained and rich in humus. Most households will need only a few plants, so prepare a few planting pockets rather than sowing long rows.

Sowing Time

End of May-June.



Crop Care

Pinch out tips of the main shoots of trailing varieties when they reach 2 ft long. Apply slug pellets or other slug repellents at the first sign of damage. Keep soil moist. Water copiously around the plants, not over them. Place black polythene or mulch around the plants in summer before fruit formation. Once the fruits start to swell feed every 14 days with a tomato fertiliser. Keep fruits on a tile to prevent rotting or slug damage.

Harvesting

Remove fruits when they are still quite small, courgettes when they are 4" long, and marrows leave until they are 8-10" long. Push thumbnail into the surface by stalk. If it goes in with ease the marrow is ready to pick. Take care when cutting them. Cut where they lie and then lift them away.

Runner Beans



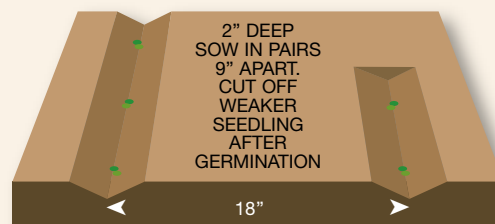
Prepare soil in winter or early spring. Dig a trench 18" wide and fork in compost before replacing soil. Apply a general fertiliser before sowing, and a liquid tomato food occasionally during the cropping season.

Sowing

Sow outdoor direct into soil

Sowing Time

May, or in modules in the greenhouse during March. Do not plant out until the chance of a frost has passed



Crop Care

Use 8ft supporting canes poles or netting. Loosely tie young plants to the supports, then they will climb naturally. Protect from slugs. Hoe regularly and water well in dry weather. Mulching will help to conserve moisture. Remove growing points, when plants reach top of the growing supports

Harvesting

Pick regularly once the pods have reached a decent size 6-8", but before the beans inside have started to swell. If you remove the pods at this stage then harvesting should continue for at least 8 weeks.