



City of  
DAREBIN

the place  
to live

# Sow What When

**A seasonal guide on when  
to sow vegetable and herb  
seeds in Darebin**

## Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we now call Darebin. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water, food and culture and pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

## Sowing Seeds

Growing from seed can be better value than purchasing seedlings from a nursery. You usually get a much greater choice in varieties if you grow from seed. They also use less energy to produce, package and transport compared to commercial seedlings. Try to source organic, open-pollinated and heirloom seeds if you can.

The dates in this calendar are a guide only and may vary in our changing climate. There are many varieties of most vegetables and sometimes new varieties are cultivated that changes or extends the growing period. Check the seed packet to establish exactly when is best to sow that variety. If you are planting seedlings, these generally extend the planting season up to a month.

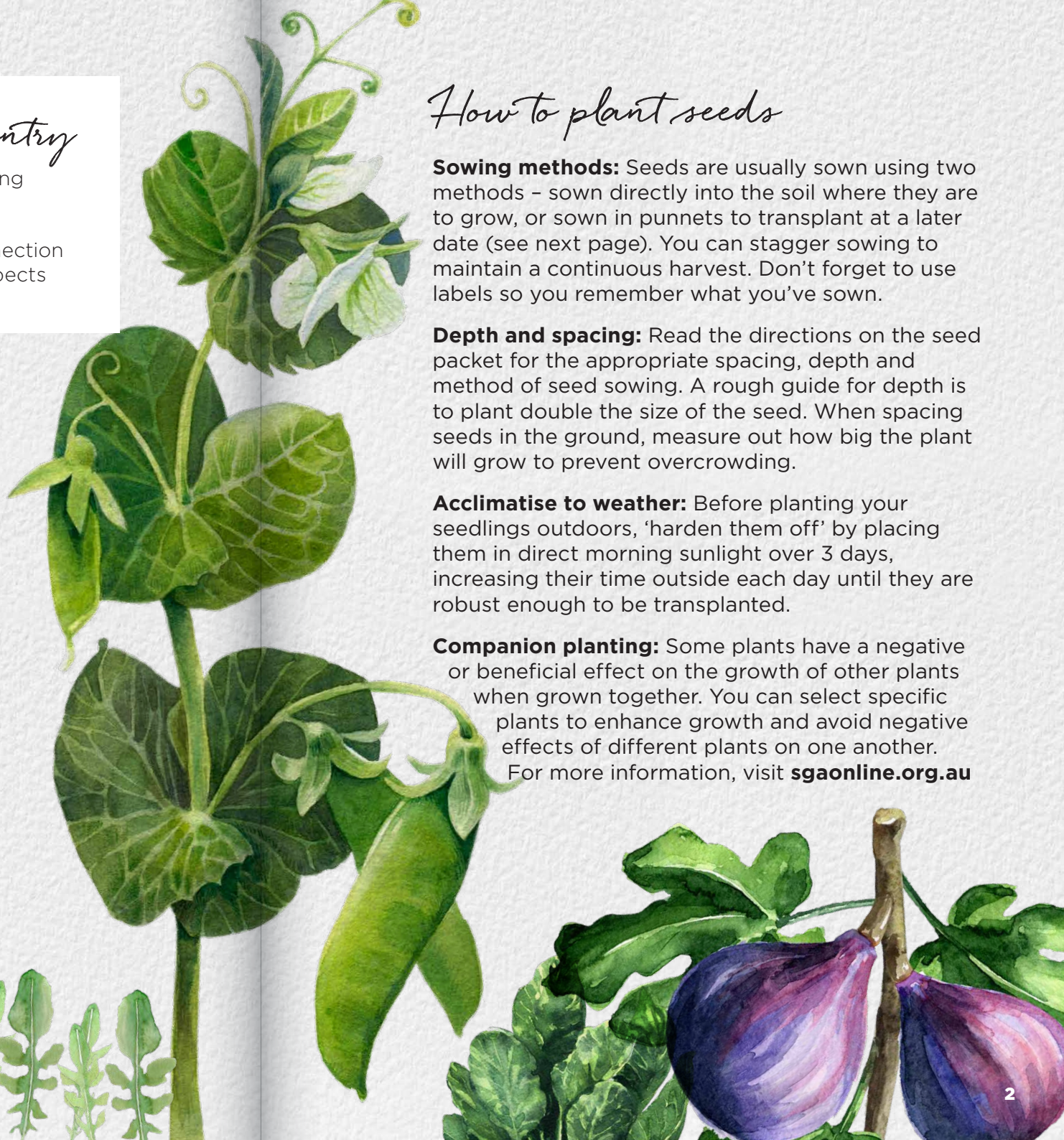
## How to plant seeds

**Sowing methods:** Seeds are usually sown using two methods – sown directly into the soil where they are to grow, or sown in punnets to transplant at a later date (see next page). You can stagger sowing to maintain a continuous harvest. Don't forget to use labels so you remember what you've sown.

**Depth and spacing:** Read the directions on the seed packet for the appropriate spacing, depth and method of seed sowing. A rough guide for depth is to plant double the size of the seed. When spacing seeds in the ground, measure out how big the plant will grow to prevent overcrowding.

**Acclimatise to weather:** Before planting your seedlings outdoors, 'harden them off' by placing them in direct morning sunlight over 3 days, increasing their time outside each day until they are robust enough to be transplanted.

**Companion planting:** Some plants have a negative or beneficial effect on the growth of other plants when grown together. You can select specific plants to enhance growth and avoid negative effects of different plants on one another. For more information, visit [sgaonline.org.au](http://sgaonline.org.au)



## Sowing in punnets

Seeds that require warmer soil to germinate (eg. tomatoes, chilli, basil) are best sown indoors in punnets or pots, ready to transplant outside when soil temperatures start to warm up. Seeds that are slow to germinate (eg. onions and leeks) are sown in punnets to protect them from drying soil or disturbance.

*Step 1*



Plant seeds into pot or punnet of seed-raising mix, at double the depth of the seed

*Step 2*



Water carefully to avoid knocking around the seed. Mist to keep moist as they grow

*Step 3*



Keep seeds in a warm place with light or they'll grow leggy and weak

*Step 4*



Once seedlings have 'true leaves' you can transplant into bigger pots or into the garden



## Direct sowing

Some seeds are best planted directly into your garden soil. This method is most commonly used for root crops (beetroot, carrot, radishes), cuburbits (pumpkin, zucchini, cucumber), as well as corn, beans and garlic.

*Step 1*



Prepare soil by weeding, loosen with a rake or hand fork, add compost and level

*Step 2*



Sow seeds to the recommended soil depth and spacing

*Step 3*



Cover with soil and water well. Keep soil moist.

*Step 4*



Protect young seedlings from pests such as slugs and snails, and extreme weather. Thin if required.

# Sow spring to summer

Vegetable seeds	When to sow	When to harvest
Artichoke, globe	All year round	August - November
Basil	September - February	Spring - autumn
Beans, bush	September - February	Summer - autumn
Beans, climbing, runner	September - January	Summer - autumn
Bitter gourd / melon	October - December	Summer - autumn
Capsicum	August - December	Summer - autumn
Celery / celeriac	August - November & March	Summer - autumn
Chilli	August - December	Summer - autumn
Chives	September - April	All year round
Corn	September - February	Summer - autumn
Cucumber	September - January	Summer - autumn
Daikon	September - October & March	Summer - autumn
Dill	August - January	Spring - autumn
Eggplant	August - December	Summer - autumn
Fennel	August - December	Summer - autumn
Okra	October - December	Summer
Potato (tubers)	August - November	Summer - autumn
Pumpkin	September - December	Summer - autumn
Rhubarb	Early spring	All year round
Rockmelon	September - December	Summer - autumn
Squash, summer gourd	September - December	Summer - autumn
Sunflower	August - January	Summer - autumn
Tomato	August - December	Summer - autumn
Watermelon	September - December	Summer - autumn
Warrigal Greens (New Zealand Spinach)	September - December	Spring - autumn
Zucchini	September - December	Summer - autumn

## September - February

Planting notes
Can be grown from seed, shoots or suckers.
Best sown in seed trays. Plant out at 4-6 weeks.
Direct sow or start in punnets. Harvest in 10 weeks. Avoid planting next to beetroot, chives, garlic, gladioli, onion and sunflower.
Plants require support. Harvest in 12-14 weeks.
Sow seeds 2.5cm deep, 50cm apart. Soak seed overnight or nick seed coat to improve germination. Harvest in 11-12 weeks.
Best sown in seed trays. Plant out at 4-6 weeks.
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Best sown in seed trays. Plant out at 4-6 weeks.
Plant in clumps. Avoid planting next to beans.
Start in punnets or direct sow in a block formation to encourage cross-pollination.
Start in punnets or direct sow in mounds with fence, trellis or wire supports.
Direct sow seeds just under surface of soil. Harvest in 8-10 weeks. Compatible with lettuce, leeks, spinach, strawberries, tomatoes.
Start in seed trays or direct sow. Harvest in 8-12 weeks. Compatible with cabbage, coriander, tomato. Avoid planting next to caraway, fennel or angelica.
Best sown in seed trays. Plant out at 4-6 weeks.
Start in seed trays or direct sow.
Start in seed trays or direct sow 2cm deep. Soak seeds overnight to improve germination.
Plant tubers in raised beds. Mound up soil around the stems as they grow. Harvest when leaves begin to rot down.
Start in punnets in September or direct sow seeds in October. Avoid planting next to potato. Hand pollinate to optimise fruit production.
Best to plant crowns 1-1.5m apart with the top of the crown level with the soil surface. Divide in winter every 5 years in late winter.
Start in punnets in September or direct sow in October. Harvest in 3-4 months.
Avoid planting next to potato.
Direct sow. Avoid planting next to beans and potato.
Best sown in seed trays and repot into larger pots before transplanting.
Start in punnets in September or direct sow in October. Harvest 4-5 months after planting. Frost sensitive.
Direct sow or start in punnets. Soak seed for 1-2 hours before sowing.
Sow in pots and transplant in 1-2 weeks when true leaves form, or direct sow. Planting nasturtiums and other flowering plants will help attract bees for pollination.

# Sow autumn to winter

March - August

Vegetable seeds	When to sow	When to harvest
Artichoke, jerusalem (tubers)	July - December	Autumn
Asparagus	March - September Plant crowns in winter	Spring - Summer
Broad beans	April - July	Winter - spring
Broccoli	September - April	All year round
Brussel sprouts	December - April	Autumn - winter
Cauliflower	December - April	Autumn - spring
Coriander	Autumn	Winter to late Spring
Garlic	March - May	Late spring - summer
Lemongrass	February - May	All year round
Murnong (yam daisy)	Autumn	Autumn
Onion, barletta (early-season)	March - July	Spring - autumn
Onion, creamy gold (mid-season)	May - August	Summer - autumn
Onion, red (mid-season)	May - August	Spring - summer
Parsnip	July - March	Summer - winter
Peas	February - August	Autumn - spring
Shallots (bulbs)	February - September	Autumn - winter
Spinach	February - September	Autumn - winter

## Planting notes

Plant tubers 30-40 cm apart.

Sow in seed trays and plant at 4-6 weeks. Or plant crowns in winter. Do not harvest spears until plant is 3 years old. Will live for 20 years.

Direct sow. May need stakes or perimeter twine.

Best sown in seed trays. Plant out at 4-6 weeks. Avoid planting next to garlic, rue, strawberry and tomato.

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Can be direct sown, around 6mm deep, or started in punnets then transplanted in 4-5 weeks. Best grown in a clump so the plants support each other.

Direct sow cloves 2cm deep with the hard base at the bottom. Soaking cloves in diluted seaweed solution for 8 hours prior to planting can help root development. Avoid planting next to beans, cabbage, peas and strawberry.

Grow from seed, cuttings or by division.

Sowing seeds in March-April will allow time to produce tubers and complete flowering before entering summer dormancy. Germination occurs within 2-4 weeks. Stratification at 4°C for 2-3 weeks can improve results. Harvest after 1 year. When the flowers blossom the tubers are ready to harvest.

Best sown in seed trays. Plant out at 4-6 weeks. Avoid planting next to asparagus, beans, gladioli and peas.

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Soak seeds in warm water overnight to aid germination.

Avoid planting next to chives, garlic, onion and shallots.

Plant bulbs with the top just visible above the soil.

Start in seed trays or direct sow. Soaking seeds can speed up germination.



# Sow all year round / extended season

Vegetable seeds	When to sow	When to harvest
Artichoke, globe	All year round	Winter - spring
Beetroot	July - March	Winter - summer
Bok choy / pak choy	Spring and autumn	All year round
Cabbage: red, savoy, green, chinese, wombok	All year round	All year round
Carrot	September - April	Summer - winter
Endive	Spring & autumn	All year round
Herbs: mint, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, sage & thyme	Early spring or early autumn	All year round
Kale	Spring & autumn	All year round
Kohlrabi	August - May	All year round
Lettuce	All year round	All year round
Leek	August - April	Late spring - autumn
Mustard greens	August - May	All year round
Nasturtium	Spring & autumn	All year round
Parsley	Spring & autumn	Spring, autumn & winter
Radish	All year round	All year round
Rocket	All year round	All year round
Silverbeet	August - March	All year round
Spring onion	All year round	All year round
Strawberry	Early spring	Spring - autumn
Turnip	January - April & August - October	Autumn & winter
Watercress	Spring & autumn	All year round

All year

## Planting notes

Best sown in seed trays. Plant out at 4-6 weeks.

Soak seeds in water for 30 minutes before planting to stimulate germination. Avoid planting next to climbing beans and tomatoes.

Start in seed trays or direct sow. Harvest in 6-7 weeks.

Best sown in seed trays. Plant out at 4-6 weeks. Each variety of cabbage has a different growing season. Check the seed packet for the best time of year to sow each variety. Avoid planting next to garlic, rue, strawberry and tomato.

Direct sow seeds as seedlings don't transplant well. Mix seed with sand to help spread the seed out. Plant with onions to deter carrot fly.

Start in seed trays or direct sow.

To reduce the growing time, propagate from cuttings taken from a mature plant or from root division. Mint can be invasive so grow in pots instead of in the ground.

Best sown in seed trays. Plant out at 4-6 weeks.

Avoid planting next to beans and tomatoes.

Start in seed trays or direct sow seeds. Plants require some shade in the heat.

Plant leeks in furrows and as leeks grow, mound up the soil around the stems. Avoid planting next to beans, peas and parsley.

Start in seed trays or sow direct. Can be used as a green manure.

Direct sow. Once established, nasturtiums self-seed readily.

Best sown in seed trays. Plant out at 4-6 weeks.

Direct sow and thin seedlings.

Start in seed trays or direct sow. Leaves can get tough and develop a bitter taste if not regularly picked. Can bolt as weather warms.


Soaking seeds in water for at least 30 minutes before planting can help stimulate germination. Avoid planting next to basil and wormwood.

Best sown in seed trays. Plant out at 4-6 weeks.

Best to plant runners or crowns. Avoid planting next to broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, and garlic.

Direct sow and thin seedlings.

Grow from seed, cuttings or transplants.



Growing your own food is great for your health, wellbeing and the environment. It can help you save money and create connection with your local community. Backyard food production is an important part of sustainable, local food systems and can build resilience in the climate emergency.

For information and resources about food gardening, visit **[darebin.vic.gov.au/gardening](http://darebin.vic.gov.au/gardening)**

For more information about Darebin's community gardens and food swaps, visit **[darebinfoodharvestnetwork.org.au](http://darebinfoodharvestnetwork.org.au)**

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