

Crop rotation

Grow annual vegetables in a different place each year

Why rotate?

- Avoid plant nutrient deficiencies
- Prevent build up of soil pests and diseases
- Easily select areas to add 'organic matter' for extra soil fertility and better structure

Starting a rotation

- List vegetables you want to grow and group into 'families' (see drawing for examples)
- Divide growing area into equal sized plots; four is usual
- Put each family in a different plot, or if sharing, group those together that need similar soil treatment, eg extra fertility

Bed one Add compost

Potato family (Solanaceae)
Aubergine, pepper/chilli, potato, tomato
Cucumber family (Cucurbitaceae)
Courgette, cucumber, marrow, melon, pumpkin, winter squash



Bed two Add leafmould

Carrot family (Apiaceae)
Carrot, parsnip, parsley
Beet family (Chenopodiaceae)
Beetroot, leaf beet, spinach
Lettuce family (Asteraceae)
Chicory, lettuce, salsify
Onion family (Alliaceae) Garlic, leek, onion, salad onion



Move crops one bed each year

Bed four Add leafmould

Pea/bean family (legumes, now Papilionaceae)
Asparagus pea, broad bean, fenugreek, French bean, mange tout, pea, runner bean



Bed three Add compost

Cabbage family (Brassicaceae)
Brussels sprout, cabbage, calabrese, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, pak choi, radish, rocket, sprouting broccoli, swede, turnip



Getting organised

- Decide order of plots, ie which families follow another
- Alternate plots needing extra fertility, eg follow hungry families like potato with less hungry families like carrot
- Follow pea/beans that fix 'nitrogen' feed with hungry families like cabbage
- Grow crops that don't belong to usual families where you can, eg sweetcorn and several salads, as long as they move each year

Keeping going

- Make month by month plan for each plot to know when crops are in the ground and what can follow on
- Keep detailed records of what happens to refine plans next year

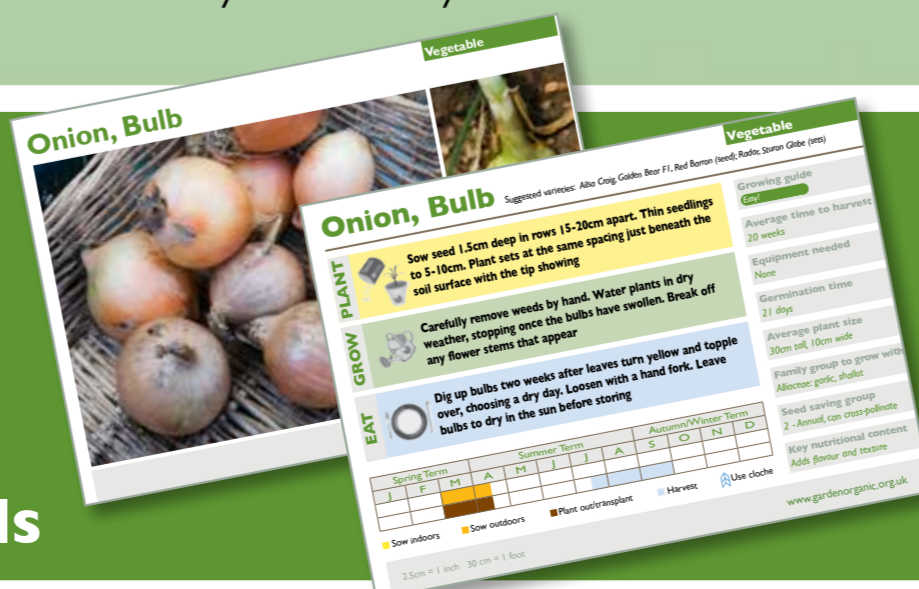
Illustrations: Verity Thompson

Further information

Booklets: Bronze, Silver and Gold

Food Growing Instruction Cards

www.gardenorganic.org.uk/schools



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