

# how to grow winter vegetables

**The best cropping winter vegetable garden is one that is well planned and prepared. The end of summer is an ideal time to start getting your garden bed ready, plan what vegetables you want to grow and the best time to plant them. It's also a good chance to rebuild the soil structure and nutrients after summer crops have depleted the soil.**

## Choosing the Right Variety

**There are many winter vegetables you can grow successfully throughout the colder months.**

Most are relatively easy to grow, such as silverbeet, brussels sprouts, broad beans, broccoli and other brassica's like cabbage and cauliflower. Spinach is also popular and grows best in cooler weather. You can either grow your winter vegetables from seed in trays indoors and plant out later (*look out for the Daltons Growing from Seed Guide*) or buy the seedlings you want from your local garden centre and plant them directly into the garden – follow the guide over the page for ideal planting times.

## Planting

**When planning the planting positions of vegetables in your garden allow enough room between plants for air circulation and garden maintenance.**



Regardless of what you decide to grow, your garden site and soil preparation are critical to its success. If you are planting your first garden, choose a site that is north facing, not too windy or exposed and the soil should ideally be deep, loose, crumbly, free draining and nutrient rich – you want to avoid having waterlogged soil over the winter months.

- To prepare your garden bed for planting, firstly remove any dead or old plants and weeds. Always take out any diseased summer crops and remove from property, you don't want diseases re-infecting your winter crops.
- Apply evenly a generous layer of **Daltons Enriched Compost** or **Daltons Organic Compost** and thoroughly work it into the soil.
- As a guide, try and work it in to 1 ½ spade depths. This ensures that the soil has been fully aerated and the compost has been mixed thoroughly with the existing soil, improving organic matter, nutrient content and microbial activity. For best results do this about one week to two weeks before planting so the soil is well aerated. This is especially important if you have just taken old crops out as these would have taken a lot of the good nutrients from the soil.
- If growing in raised planters or gardens, fill up the site with either **Daltons Premium Garden Mix** or **Daltons Garden Time™ Vegetable Mix** or **Daltons Organic Vegetable Mix**.
- Apply a very light layer of mulch around vegetable seedlings, as a thick layer can lead to cold wet soils in winter.

## Growing Vegetables in Pots

If you have limited space you can successfully grow winter vegetables in pots or containers; try silverbeet, spinach, broccoli, peas and winter lettuce. The advantage of containers means you can grow veggies in close proximity to your house for easy access and use. When selecting pots or containers to plant in, ensure they are of an adequate size and depth and always use good quality container mix such as **Daltons Garden Time™ Vegetable Mix**. These special mixes contain well balanced, slow release nutrients and have moisture retaining qualities. It's a good idea to change the soil in pots or containers every time you want to grow a new crop, as it can get depleted. Alternatively you can revive old soil with **Daltons Garden Time™ Vegetable Fertiliser**. Position your pots or containers in a warm sunny, north facing position, away from strong winds. Add layer of **Daltons Mulch & Grow** on top for improved moisture retention.

## Feeding and Watering

**Winter vegetables tend to be more hardy and feeding and watering is not as important if you prepared your soil well before planting.**

Good soil preparation means there should be enough nutrients in your soil to get your vegetables through the winter months. Unlike summer vegetables, winter vegetables need less feeding, and only really require a side dressing of **Daltons Garden Time™ Vegetable Fertiliser** during the early months of the plant getting established eg April/May. Always ensure you water the fertiliser in well. Add layer of **Daltons Mulch & Grow** on top for improved moisture retention.

## Garden Maintenance

**With any vegetable garden try to have good garden practices that include garden hygiene such as cleaning up any dead leaves or foliage, and regular weeding. This helps to keep pests and diseases at bay.**

## Empty Beds

If you are not planting any vegetables during winter, don't let beds sit empty and exposed. It's worth sowing a 'green crop' to add nutrients into the soil and protect beds over winter. Green crops help improve soil structure and provide organic Nitrogen naturally. Sow common *lupin* and *mustard* directly into the soil. Once they have grown 30cm and before they flower, pull up the plants and chop them into pieces with a spade, then dig them back into the soil. Leave them to break down in the soil for 6-8 weeks before you plant anything new.

## Pests and Diseases

**In general, winter vegetables tend to be pest and disease free because of the colder temperatures.**

But in northern parts of New Zealand hungry slugs and snails can be a problem in your winter garden. Protect plants with non-toxic pet and child friendly slug/snail pellets, or try organic alternatives such as beer traps, and surrounding plants with crushed shell, bark, propagation sand or saw dust.

# Regional Planting Guide

## VEGETABLE

### PLANTING AND HARVESTING (Warmer climates)

### PLANTING AND HARVESTING (Cooler climates)

BROAD BEANS

**PLANTING:** Sowing direct: March-June.  
**HARVESTING:** From August-October.

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**HARVESTING:** From August-October.

BROCCOLI

**PLANTING:** Sow in seed trays from early March, and plant out in garden from April-May.  
**HARVESTING:** July/August.

**PLANTING:** Sow in seed trays from late February, and plant out in garden from late March-mid May.  
**HARVESTING:** July/August.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

\*Grows better in colder climates

**PLANTING:** Sow in seed trays from mid/late January, and plant out in garden from April-May.  
**HARVESTING:** July/August.

**PLANTING:** Sow in seed trays from mid/late February plant out in garden from April-May.  
**HARVESTING:** July/August.

CAULIFLOWER

**PLANTING:** Sow in seed trays from mid/late January and plant out in garden from March-April.  
**HARVESTING:** July/August.

*As per warmer climates.*

CARROTS

**PLANTING:** Direct sow anytime of the year.  
**HARVESTING:** Throughout the year.

*As per warmer climates.*

KALE (brocole)

**PLANTING:** Sow in seed trays from mid/late January and plant out in garden from March-April.  
**HARVESTING:** July/August.

*As per warmer climates.*

LEEKs

\*Can be grown all year round

**PLANTING:** Plant all year round. Sow in seed trays 6 weeks before planting.  
**HARVESTING:** 3 months after planting.

*As per warmer climates.*

ONIONS

**PLANTING:** Sow direct all year round.  
**HARVESTING:** 8-12 weeks after planting.

*As per warmer climates.*

PAK CHOY (Asian greens)

\*Can be grown all year round

**PLANTING:** Sow in seed trays from mid/late January and plant out in garden from March-May.  
**HARVESTING:** 4-6 weeks after planting.

*As per warmer climates.*

PEAS

**PLANTING:** Sow direct in garden April/May.  
**HARVESTING:** 12 weeks after planting.

*As per warmer climates.*

POTATO

\*Warm areas only

**PLANTING:** All year round.  
**HARVESTING:** 4-5 months from planting.

*As per warmer climates.*

SILVERBEEET (Swiss Chard)  
\*Can be grown all year round

**PLANTING:** Sow in seed trays from mid/late January (for winter crops) plant out in garden from March/April.

*As per warmer climates.*

**HARVESTING:** Throughout winter.

SPINACH

\*Can be grown all year round

**PLANTING:** Sow in seed trays from mid/late January (for winter crops) plant out in garden from March/April.

*As per warmer climates.*

**HARVESTING:** Throughout winter.

SWEDE

\*Cold regions only



**PLANTING:** Sow direct in garden April/May.

**HARVESTING:** Throughout winter (approx 12-14 weeks after planting).

TURNIP

\*Cold regions only



**PLANTING:** Sow direct in garden April/May.

**HARVESTING:** Throughout winter (approx 12-14 weeks after planting).

PARSNIP

**PLANTING:** Sow direct in garden all year round.

*As per warmer climates.*

**HARVESTING:** All year round.

BEETROOT

\*Can be grown all year round

**PLANTING:** Sow direct in garden April/ May (for winter crops).

*As per warmer climates.*

**HARVESTING:** 8-10 weeks after sowing.

*What vegetables you plant and when will depend on the area you live in. Always check that the variety you purchase is suited to your climate.*

## Gardening Terms Explained

### GREEN CROPS

The growing of a cover crop that will be dug back into the soil to improve soil quality. They are useful if you have empty garden beds, particularly over winter.

### MULCHING

A top layer of organic matter so the soil and plant are protected.

### SIDE DRESSING

Means to apply fertiliser to the soil on or around the sides of the plant.

### SUCCESSION PLANTING

Staggering your plantings or planting varieties so you do not have them all cropping at once.

## Products to try

Daltons Garden Time™ Vegetable Fertiliser

Daltons Garden Time™ Vegetable Mix

Daltons Organic Compost | Daltons Organic Vegetable Mix

Daltons Premium Garden Mix | Daltons Mulch and Grow

Daltons Enriched Compost

