

It's June. Sow What???

Sowing seeds is a productive activity in June, even though here in the Pacific Northwest, one may often have to duck between raindrops. Find space to grow something different this June. Sow salad makings in a container. Aim to have home-grown gourmet salads by the Fourth of July. Read on for more choices!

ARUGULA (GARDEN ROCKET)

"Pungent, pleasantly sourish, and mustardy" is how Angelo Pellegrini described arugula in his 1970 classic, *The Food-Lover's Garden*. Sow small quantities at weekly intervals through fall. Use the young leaves in salads and sandwiches. Although to Pellegrini arugula was "of all herbaceous plants, ... the easiest to cultivate and the least exacting in its soil requirements", gardeners who sow it in rich moist soil in a lightly shaded position, especially when the weather is hot, are most successful. The [Cook's Garden Catalog](#) offers *Selvatica Arugula* (#229), a smaller, wilder, Italian form.

BEANS, BUSH SNAP

Sow bush beans at about twenty-day intervals. When the pods are nearly full size, they should be harvested every day or two to ensure the best quality.

BEETS

Sow at two- to three-week intervals until midsummer for a continuous harvest of roots and greens. Sow "Early Wonder" ([Territorial Seed Company](#)), or a comparable variety, late this month, or at least before mid-July, for harvest all winter long.

BROCCOLI

For an abundant fall harvest of broccoli, try [Territorial Seed Company's](#) 'Hybrid Broccoli Blend' (BR085). Interplant leaf lettuce with broccoli.

CABBAGE

Early types of cabbage may be sown throughout June. Sow at two-week intervals for a longer harvest. Try six-inch spacing and harvesting every other cabbage when they are very young and tasty. The later autumn-maturing types should be sown early in the month. Space them farther apart and plan for a tall crop like pole beans or corn to provide afternoon shade for the cabbage plants during the warmest days of summer.

CARROTS

Sow at two- to three-week intervals for a continuous harvest.

CHERVIL

James Adams, in *Landscaping with Herbs*, says that "chervil is a very sweet herb and should be added to salads fresh and is a must as a sweetener in rice puddings or soups..." Because chervil's sensitivity to short nights causes it to send up flowering stalks during summer, early spring and late summer sowing are usually recommended. However, slow-to-bolt varieties are available (see [The Cook's Garden Catalog](#), #233). Sow chervil every few weeks and harvest young plants regularly to keep them small and producing new growth, which is the only fresh foliage worth using. "A sweet garnish of fresh chervil sprinkled on vegetable dishes and potato or egg salads adds flavor and fragrance rarely experienced even in the finest restaurants." (James Adams, *Landscaping with Herbs*)

CHICORY, LEAF VARIETIES (*Cichorium intypus*)

Sow in June in fairly good soil, thinning to six inches apart. By late September, heads which resemble Romaine may be harvested. If dry and disease-free when refrigerated in a plastic bag, chicory keeps for months and loses some of its bitterness while being stored. As an ingredient in a mixed salad, it has good texture, and the red-streaked varieties add color as well. In mild climates, chicory may be left in the garden until harvested; in wet climates, it ought to be under a protective cover during fall and winter. [Heirloom Seeds](#) offers Catalogna and Witloof varieties.

CILANTRO

Sow a variety bred for leaf production every few weeks for a continuous supply.

CRESS, GARDEN

Sow a small amount of garden cress (*Lepidium sativum*) frequently, in light well-drained soil. Provide shade in hot weather. When seedlings are two inches tall, make the first of four successive cuttings.

DILL

Sow from spring to mid-summer in clumps.

FLORENCE FENNEL (BULB FENNEL))

Sow Florence fennel directly in the garden this month for a fall harvest.

LETTUCE

Sow a little every week. Look for varieties that are recommended for summer use. [The Cook's Garden](#) catalog offers thirteen varieties of summer lettuce, as well as eight custom-blended summer mixes.

MIZUNA (KYONA MIZUNA)

Sow this mild-flavored, slow-to-bolt mustard (a common mesclun ingredient) every week or two.

MUSTARD

Sow at three- to four-week intervals.

PAC CHOI

[Territorial Seed Company's](#) bolt-resistant Chinese variety pac choi (OV579) may be sown from early spring to late

PARSLEY

Speed up parsley's notoriously long germination time (3 to 6 weeks) by soaking fresh seed 24 hours in warm water before sowing. Some gardeners recommend placing soaked seeds in a closed container in the refrigerator, checking daily for germination (which should occur within a week), and then planting. Others pour boiling water in the furrow before sowing soaked seed. Remember, it takes a lot of parsley to make tabbouleh; and, chewing parsley is a good way to freshen the breath! The curly variety of parsley makes a good edging plant. Both types look good among annuals.

PARSNIPS

Parsnip seedlings may take all month just to emerge from the soil. Cover them with seed-starting mix so that they don't sulk under crusty clay. Sowing radish seeds in the furrow with the parsnip seed may also help break the soil.

PEAS

Select enation mosaic-virus resistant peas for planting in June. Sow the seeds 1 1/2 to 2 inches deep, and if the weather is warm, cover them with a single thickness of newspaper to keep them cool. Remove the paper as soon as seedlings break through the soil.

PURSLANE, SUMMER

Sow summer purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*) each month during summer for a continuous supply. Use fresh leaves and stems, preferably before flowering. Cut just above ground level.

RADICCHIO

Sow a short row every week or two during the growing season.

RADISH, DAIKON, AND RAT'S TAIL

The white roots of 'Tokinashi' daikon radish grow 12 to 15 inches long and weigh in excess of a pound. The crisp, fine-textured, somewhat pungent radishes are good raw, pickled, or as a stir-fry ingredient. Sow seeds 2 inches apart in loose, deeply worked soil; thin to 4 to 6 inches in rows which are 18 inches apart. Although mature in 60 days, 'Tokinashi' may be harvested earlier. The leaves are used as greens in soups and vegetable dishes. [Nichols Garden Nursery](#) sells 'Tokinashi', which means 'All Seasons' (VRA382).

'Rat's Tail' is an aerial radish which is grown for its attractive dark purple seed pods; it produces no edible root. The pods are hot, spicy, and pungent, and are good raw in salads or pickled. The plant is very tolerant of summer heat (just in case we get some this year, we thought you should know).

RUTABAGA

June sowings (preferably the last half of the month) make gigantic roots, according to West Coast Seeds.

SCALLIONS (BUNCHING ONIONS)

Sow at three- to four-week intervals.

SPINACH

Sow at three- to four-week intervals.

SWISS CHARD

You may already have Swiss Chard growing in the vegetable garden (or among your ornamentals). Do you harvest just the outer leaves? Consider sowing short rows of chard every three to four weeks, and harvesting entire plants when the leafy portions are at their prime (before they attain a twelve-inch height). If you cut off all stalks two inches above the base of the plant, a second crop of smaller leaves should grow.

Resources

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Pavord, Anna. *The New Kitchen Garden*. New York, New York: DK Publishing, Inc. 1996.

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Rodale's *All-New Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening*. Emmaus, Pennsylvania: Rodale Press, 1992.

Van Patten, George. *Organic Garden Vegetables*. Portland, Oregon: Van Patten Publishing, 1991.

Watson, Benjamin. *Taylor's Guide to Heirloom Vegetables*. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.

[The Cook's Garden Catalog](#), Spring/Summer 2002, 1-800-457-9703

[Nichols Garden Nursery](#)

[The Territorial Seed Company](#) 2002 Catalog

[West Coast Seeds](#)

[Heirloom Seeds](#)