

GROWING SPRING ONIONS

Spring onions, quick, hardy and easy to grow. They are ideal for catch-cropping and year-round cultivation, with their small size meaning they can be easily squeezed into unused corners of the garden. Spring onions are an extremely versatile culinary ingredient.

Seed Sowing

Sow your spring onion seeds from January through September. They are ideal for direct sowing from March onwards, but you can sow indoors in modules from January and plant out later if that suits you. Sow seeds no deeper than 1 cm; if sown too deep, they will not germinate. They are well-suited for successional sowing for continual harvests throughout the season.

Transplanting

Ensure your seedbed is free from weeds. Directly sow your seeds in rows around 10 cm apart; sow the seeds in a drill and thin out later to 2-3 cm apart. Young plants should be ready after around 4-5 weeks. Plant them 25 cm apart in rows 25 cm apart and water them in well. Spring onions can be planted in clusters as well as rows.

Plant Care

Spring onions are relatively easy. They do not like competition, so keep them weed-free and hoe regularly. They love a free-draining, rich soil; if it's too rich, you may get a lot more green top growth.

Challenges

Allium Leaf miners can cause a lot of damage if left unchecked; these little grubs eat between the layers in the leaf and should be removed as soon as spotted. Onion flies are another pest and can lay eggs on young alliums. The grubs eat their way down into the roots, and the plant will start to grow yellow, then brown before dying off. Using insect mesh can prevent attacks.

Harvest

Spring onions should be ready around 12 weeks after sowing. Harvest the whole plant using a hand trowel and gently pulling up; they can bruise, which will shorten shelf life.

Culinary Ideas

Spring onions are an extremely versatile culinary ingredient. Delicious both cooked and raw, they can be added to cooking or used as a garnish.

Seed Saving

To save spring onion seeds, grow at least 50 plants to maintain genetic diversity and isolate them from other plants in the same species. Seeds can be harvested when the seed casing has turned papery. Remove seed heads and leave them in a dry, well-ventilated place to dry for at least 10 days. Rub the seeds off the dry plant and store them in a cool, dry place. Stored this way, seeds can remain viable for up to 2 years.