

# Patch & Pot

## Seasonal Journal

*A month-by-month companion for small-space food growing in the UK & Ireland*

### How to use this journal

Read each month as a friendly plan. If a crop is “on the edge” for your area, I’ll say so and suggest a fix, like using fleece, a mini-polytunnel, a cold frame, or growing indoors. When you see “coastal west” think milder but windier and wetter. When you see “east” think brighter, drier, and sometimes colder nights. “Upland” and “far north” mean late frosts and short, cool summers, so heat lovers need cover.

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### January, quiet work that matters

Mostly planning, seed sorting, and cleaning tools, yet a few things tick over.

#### Garlic

If you planted in autumn, you’re set. In **England South & South-West** and **Ireland South**, you can still plant cloves on well-drained beds or deep tubs. In **Scotland Far North & Highlands, Orkney, Shetland**, and the **Outer Hebrides**, plant only if you can keep soil from sitting wet. Hardneck types are happiest in real cold; softneck for milder coasts.

#### Onions & Shallots (overwintering sets)

Hold off in very cold, wet ground. In **England South, Wales South Coast**, and **Ireland South/East**, overwintering sets are fine. Shelter from wind to stop rocking.

#### Herbs indoors

Chives, parsley, and mint survive on bright sills. Basil sulks now, wait.

#### Mindful note

Sketch where pots will live. Make a tiny watering plan. A plan now saves plants later.

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### February, stretching toward spring

Light strengthens, sowing can begin under cover.

#### Chillies & Sweet Peppers

Start in warmth indoors. Best yields come from early sowings, but only with light and heat. In **Scotland outside the Central Belt, Wales Uplands, Ireland West/North**, aim for sturdy indoor plants that won’t move outside until June. Grow dwarf or early types if your season is short.

### **Tomatoes**

Can be started now if you have strong light. Otherwise wait for March. In **England South & London heat island**, February sowings pay off. Elsewhere, patience is kinder.

### **Broad Beans**

Sow hardy types in modules. Plant out in **England South & South-West** and **Ireland South** under fleece. In **Scotland West Coast** and **Wales West**, wet winds are the enemy, give shelter.

### **Spinach & Salad Leaves**

Under cloche or in a cold frame in milder districts. Keep slugs in mind in wet zones.

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## **March, the true beginning**

A month of momentum. Protect from late frosts.

### **Peas**

Sow in deep pots or gutters. In **Scotland East Coast**, winds nip seedlings, so fleecing helps. In **Ireland West** and **Wales West**, slug patrol begins now. Choose sugar snaps or mangetout for best yields in cool summers.

### **Carrots**

Early varieties in deep tubs with fresh, stone-free mix. In **England East**, germination is good once soil warms. In **north and uplands**, wait until late March or use a cloche.

### **Beetroot**

Start 2–3 seeds per module, thin to one. Transplant gently. Reliable almost everywhere.

### **Radish**

Fast wins. Sow little and often. Flea beetle appears later in east and midlands, mesh is magic.

### **Leafy Greens**

Lettuce, rocket, mustards, chard, kale. In **coastal west**, watch for mildew in damp air; in **east**, watch for cold nights after bright days.

### **Potatoes (first earlies)**

Into sacks by late March in **England South/South-West** and **Ireland South & East**. Elsewhere, hold until April. Keep sacks mobile to chase sun and dodge frost.

### **Onion & Shallot Sets**

In most regions now. Avoid waterlogged spots.

### **Mindful note**

March encourages over-sowing. Sow a little, often. Your future self will thank you.

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## April, the surge

The greenhouse or a sunny window becomes the engine room.

### French Beans & Runner Beans

Sow in modules indoors. Outdoors only in **England South** late in the month. In **Scotland** and **Ireland West**, wait for May. Dwarf French beans give steady pot yields even in short summers.

### Sweetcorn

Sow indoors, warm. Plant out in blocks later. Best outdoors in **England South & South-West, Wales South, Ireland South/East**. Elsewhere needs warm microclimates or a tunnel.

### Courgettes & Squash

Sow indoors mid to late April so plants don't outgrow pots before frost danger passes. In **short seasons** choose compact or bush types.

### Cucumbers (ridge/outdoor)

Sow indoors late April. For **north and islands**, a greenhouse is kinder.

### Brassicas

Cabbage, calabrese, cauliflowers, sprouting broccoli, Brussels sprouts. Start in modules. Flea beetle is fierce in **England East & Midlands** once warm, fine mesh from day one helps.

### Herbs

Basil indoors. Coriander prefers cool quarters. Dill is happy in spring before summer heat.

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## May, planting out, carefully

Frost can still bite early May. Keep fleece ready.

### Tomatoes

Hardy planting outdoors from mid to late May in **England South & South-West, Wales South, Ireland South & East**. Elsewhere, wait until early to mid-June or keep in greenhouse. Choose bush/determinate for containers. Cordon types need big tubs and regular feeding.

### Peppers & Aubergine

Pots in a greenhouse or a very sheltered, south-facing patio. Outdoors only in **warmest southern pockets** by month end.

### Beans

Plant out once nights are mild. Stake early. In windy coasts and islands, use shorter wigwams and sheltered corners.

### Sweetcorn

Harden off and plant in blocks. In **north and uplands**, the greenhouse wins.

### **Courgettes & Squash**

Big tubs with rich compost. One plant per 35–50 L. Mulch to keep moisture.

### **Potatoes**

Second earlies and maincrop into sacks now everywhere. Keep earthing up.

### **Salads**

A fresh sow every 10–14 days keeps bowls full through summer.

### **Mindful note**

Planting out is a little ceremony, water, label, wish it well. Slower is kinder than shock.

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## **June, growth at full tilt**

Feeding, tying in, and quiet successions.

### **Tomatoes**

Outdoors across the UK & Ireland now. Pinch out side shoots on cordons. In **coastal west**, manage blight risk with airflow and soil-level watering. In **east**, watch for blossom end rot in bright heat, steady watering prevents it.

### **Peppers & Aubergine**

Stake early. In **Scotland Far North & Islands**, keep in greenhouse. In **Ireland West**, shelter from wind and rain splash.

### **Cucumbers (ridge)**

Plant out and train. Keep roots mulched and moist.

### **Beans**

French beans fly now. Pick often for more pods. Runner beans love cool moist air (north and west excel), French beans love warm bright air (south and east excel).

### **Carrots, Beetroot, Radish**

Keep successions rolling. Thin before the scent attracts carrot fly.

### **Herbs**

Basil loves outdoor heat; coriander bolts if hot, sow in part shade in summer.

### **Sweetcorn**

Water deeply and feed once a week.

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## **July, harvest and rhythm**

Pick little and often. Plants respond to kindness.

### **Salad leaves**

Cut outer leaves and let hearts regrow. Sow heat-tolerant lettuces in dappled shade.

### **Peas & Beans**

Keep picking. Missed pods slow the plant.

### **Courgettes**

Daily checks. Small fruits taste best. Powdery mildew arrives in **east and midlands**, remove worst leaves, water at soil level.

### **Potatoes**

First earlies are ready. Tip sacks into a trug and sift by hand.

### **Tomatoes**

Thin leaves lightly for airflow in humid west and islands. Feed weekly.

### **Mindful note**

Notice how each crop tastes different week by week. Jot a line about flavour and weather.

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## **August, peak plates and late sowings**

Keep one eye on today, one on autumn.

### **Kale, Chard, Spinach**

Sow for autumn and winter pots. In **north and islands**, fleece baby plants on breezy days.

### **Carrots & Beetroot**

Last realistic sowings for baby roots. East has best late germination; west needs slug vigilance.

### **French Beans**

Sow a final short row in warm south. Elsewhere stick with harvest and care.

### **Tomatoes**

Remove new flowers late in the month in cool regions so existing fruit ripens.

### **Sweetcorn**

Ready when silks brown and a kernel gives milky juice.

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## **September, summer turns**

Time for winter foundations.

### **Garlic**

In **north and highlands** and **exposed islands**, plant hardneck types now into well-drained tubs. Elsewhere, wait for October if you like.

### **Broad Beans & Peas (overwintering)**

Sow hardy types. In **Ireland West**, fleece helps with winter gales. In **England South**, autumn sowings give very early pickings.

### **Salads for winter**

Mizuna, mustard, claytonia, winter lettuces. Great in troughs under a simple frame.

### **Potatoes**

Lift maincrops on dry days and cure skins before storing.

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## **October, plant for the cold months**

### **Garlic & Onions**

Prime time for most districts. In **very wet west coasts**, plant in deep tubs to avoid rot.

### **Spinach & Chard**

Small final sowings in sheltered places. These carry leaves into winter.

### **Brassicas**

Transplant winter cabbage and kale. Protect from wind rock in islands and uplands.

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## **November, the small season**

### **Garlic**

Finish planting. Mulch against heavy rain impact.

### **Broad Beans**

Last overwinter sowings.

### **Herbs**

Pot up parsley and chives to bring inside.

### **Mindful note**

Sharpen tools, oil handles, tidy ties and labels. Winter care is spring's head start.

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## **December, rest and store**

Harvest kale, sprouts, hardy herbs. Mulch tubs. Breathe.

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# Crop Profiles, practical details with regional caveats

Use these when you want specifics beyond the month flow. All are container-friendly unless noted.

## Alliums

### Garlic

- **Sow/plant:** Oct to Feb by region, earlier in north and uplands.
- **Container:** 25–30 cm deep tub, 10–12 cm between cloves.
- **Care:** Full sun, sharp drainage, steady moisture.
- **Regions:**
  - **Scotland Far North/Islands:** plant Sep–Oct with grit; avoid waterlog.
  - **England South & Ireland South:** Nov–Jan easy.
  - **West Coasts:** pots on feet to shed rain.

### Onions (sets) & Shallots

- **Sow/plant:** Sets Mar–Apr; overwintering types Oct–Nov in mild areas.
- **Container:** 30–40 cm deep trough, 10 cm spacing.
- **Caveats:** Wet winds loosen sets in **coastal west**, firm and mulch.

### Leeks

- **Sow:** Mar in modules; plant out May–Jun.
- **Container:** deep crate or bed, 20 cm apart.
- **Regions:** Thrive in cool summers, **Scotland** and **Wales** do well.

### Spring Onions

- **Sow:** Little and often Mar–Aug.
- **Container:** any trough, dense sowing fine.
- **Note:** Good in every region.

## Legumes

### Broad Beans

- **Sow:** Oct/Nov or Feb/Mar.
- **Container:** 35–40 cm deep tub, 15–20 cm spacing.
- **Regions:**
  - **England South/Ireland South:** autumn for earliest crops.
  - **North/Islands/Uplands:** spring sowings safer; shelter from gales.

## Peas

- **Sow:** Mar–Apr; second sow late May.
- **Container:** deep tub with twigs or mesh.
- **Regions:**
  - **Cooler north and west** excel with peas.
  - **Warmer south/east** prefers early sowings before heat.

## French Beans

- **Sow:** May indoors, out Jun.
- **Container:** 30 L for dwarf, bigger for climbing with poles.
- **Regions:**
  - **South/east** get long runs outdoors.
  - **North/west** choose dwarf types or greenhouse.

## Runner Beans

- **Sow:** May.
- **Regions:** Love cool moist air, **west coasts** and **north** shine. Shelter from wind.

## Roots

### Carrots

- **Sow:** Mar–Jul in deep, stone-free mix.
- **Container:** 30–40 cm deep.
- **Regions:**
  - **East;** great germination.
  - **Wet west;** beware slugs, use grit mulches and careful watering.

### Beetroot

- **Sow:** Apr–Jul.
- **Container:** 25–30 cm deep tub, 10–12 cm spacing.
- **Regions:** All fine; consistent in variable summers.

### Radish

- **Sow:** Mar–Sep little and often.
- **Regions:** Quick in all districts; bolt risk in hot south, grow in part shade.

### Parsnip, Turnip, Swede

- **Sow:** Apr–May for parsnip; turnip from Mar; swede May/Jun.
- **Containers:** deep tubs only; swede prefers beds.
- **Regions:** Better in **north and east** where summers are cooler.



# Brassicas

## Cabbage

- **Sow:** Spring for summer cabbage; Jul/Aug for winter types.
- **Container:** deep, firm compost, 30–40 cm spacing.
- **Regions:** Strong in **Scotland** and **Wales**; protect from wind rock.

## Calabrese (green broccoli)

- **Sow:** Mar–Apr, harvest summer.
- **Container:** 30 L per plant.
- **Regions:** Needs steady water in south/east.

## Purple Sprouting Broccoli

- **Sow:** Apr–May, harvest late winter to spring.
- **Regions:** Loves **cooler north** and **coastal west**, but needs staking in gales.

## Cauliflower

- **Sow:** Spring for summer; late summer for winter.
- **Note:** Fussy in heat; best in **north/east** with even watering.

## Brussels Sprouts

- **Sow:** Apr; harvest winter.
- **Regions:** Great in **Scotland** and **Wales**; stake against wind.

## Kale

- **Sow:** Mar–Aug; harvest late summer through winter.
- **Regions:** Hero crop for **north/west**. Fleece seedlings from pigeons and wind.

# Leafy Greens

## Lettuce & Salad Mixes

- **Sow:** Mar–Sep, every 10–14 days.
- **Regions:**
  - **South/east;** grow in light shade in mid-summer.
  - **West;** mildew risk; space out for airflow.

## Spinach

- **Sow:** Mar–May, Aug–Sep.
- **Regions:** Bolts in heat; **north and coasts** get better summer success.

## Chard

- **Sow:** Apr–Jul; year-round harvest.
- **Regions:** Reliable everywhere; loves cool nights.

## Asian Greens (pak choi, mizuna, mustards)

- **Sow:** spring and late summer.
- **Regions:** Bolt in heat in south/east; do best in shoulder seasons or under light shade.

# Fruiting Vegetables

## Tomatoes (bush and cordon)

- **Sow:** Feb–Mar indoors. Plant out May/Jun.
- **Container:** 30–40 L for bush; 40–50 L for cordon.
- **Regions:**
  - **South & urban heat islands;** outdoors fine.
  - **North/islands/uplands;** greenhouse best.
  - **West;** blight risk: early, blight-tolerant, or in shelter.

## Peppers & Chillies

- **Sow:** Feb indoors.
- **Regions:** Greenhouse or warm patio. In **north/west**, focus on small, early types.

## Aubergine

- **Sow:** Feb/Mar indoors.
- **Regions:** Greenhouse recommended except warmest south.

## Cucumbers (ridge)

- **Sow:** late Apr inside; plant out Jun.
- **Regions:** Shelter from winds. Avoid cold nights in north/islands.

## Courgettes

- **Sow:** Apr inside; plant out late May/Jun.
- **Regions:** Everywhere with a decent summer; in **cool wet summers**, choose compact early varieties.

## Pumpkins & Winter Squash

- **Sow:** late Apr/May.
- **Regions:** Best outdoors in **England South & South-West, Wales South, Ireland South**. Elsewhere needs heat and space or a tunnel.

## Sweetcorn

- **Sow:** Apr; plant out late May/Jun in blocks.
- **Regions:** Strongest in **south**; greenhouse helper in **north**.

## Tubers & Stems

### Potatoes

- **Sow/plant:** First earlies Mar/Apr; maincrop Apr/May.
- **Container:** 35–50 L sacks; keep topping with compost.
- **Regions:** Good everywhere if you can chase the sun and shelter from wind.

### Celery & Celeriac

- **Sow:** Feb/Mar indoors.
- **Regions:** Even moisture essential. **West** and **north** do well if wind-sheltered.

### Florence Fennel

- **Sow:** After last frost for summer crops, or July for autumn.
- **Regions:** Bolts in heat in south/east, sow late summer there.

## Herbs

### Basil

- **Sow:** Mar indoors; out only in real warmth.
- **Regions:** South patios, or greenhouse in north/west.

### Parsley

- **Sow:** spring and late summer. Tougher than it looks, good year-round in tubs.

### Coriander

- **Sow:** little and often; shade in hot south/east. Spring and late summer best.

### Dill

- **Sow:** spring and late summer; shelter from wind.

### Chives

- **Sow/divide:** easy, hardy, loves pots.

## Thyme, Rosemary, Sage, Oregano

- **Plants:** happiest in gritty mix and sun. In **wet west**, put in well-drained troughs with feet.

## Mint

- **Plant:** always in its own pot.

## Bay

- **Plant:** in a large pot, shelter from worst winter winds in north and islands.

# Soft Fruit & Perennials

## Strawberries

- **Plant:** spring, or late summer runners.
- **Regions:** Great everywhere with sun and water. Replace plants every three years.

## Raspberries

- **Plant:** autumn to spring. Autumn-fruiting types for small spaces. Stake well in winds.

## Currants & Gooseberries

- **Plant:** bare-root in winter, pots anytime. Tolerate cool summers; love **Scotland** and **north**.

## Blueberries

- **Plant:** ericaceous compost only, rainwater best. Shelter from wind in islands and uplands.

## Rhubarb

- **Plant:** crowns in winter/early spring. Big pots. Loves cool climates.

## Asparagus

- **Plant:** crowns in spring, large deep bed or very big container. Best in **England South & East** with free-draining soil. Borderline elsewhere, accept lighter yields or use raised beds and extra drainage.

## Artichokes (globe & Jerusalem)

- **Globe:** mild south and sheltered coasts.
  - **Jerusalem:** easier; big tubs or beds, can cope in most regions if staked.
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## Borderline crops and how to make them happy

- **Tomatoes in blight-heavy west and islands:** choose early or blight-tolerant varieties, grow under a rain-proof lean-to, water only at the base, thin leaves for airflow.
  - **Peppers, aubergines in north/uplands:** greenhouse or a bright indoor bay through June; set fruit earlier, then they'll finish outside on warm days.
  - **Sweetcorn in short summers:** grow in the warmest corner, black mulch for soil warmth, and choose extra-early types.
  - **Asparagus in heavy wet ground:** very deep raised bed with lots of grit, or reconsider and grow something that loves you back.
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## Gentle succession rhythm

- **Every 2 weeks from March:** sow a tiny tray of salad leaves and spring onions.
  - **Every month from April to July:** sow beetroot, carrots, and French beans.
  - **Late July and August:** sow kale, chard, spinach, and Asian greens for autumn through winter.
  - **September/October:** plant garlic and overwinter onions; sow hardy broad beans if your site isn't a wind tunnel.
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## Regional quick prompts

### Scotland

- **Central Belt:** decent warmth, urban shelter; almost everything works with a late spring start.
- **West Coast:** mild, wet, windy, stake early, use mesh, choose mildew-resistant greens.
- **East Coast:** brighter, drier, cooler nights, great for roots and peas.
- **Far North & Highlands:** short summer, choose early or dwarf varieties; greenhouse helps.
- **Orkney, Shetland, Outer Hebrides:** salt wind and gales, sturdy frames, low-growing types, and windbreak mesh are essential.

### England

- **South & South-East:** long season, almost everything; watch drought and bolt.
- **South-West:** mild, wet, windy, huge growth if staked and mulched; blight management.
- **East (Anglia & Lincs):** sunny, dry, roots, onions, tomatoes do brilliantly with reliable watering.
- **Midlands:** balanced, follow main timings; fleece for late frosts.
- **North-West / North-East:** cooler, shorter summers, choose early types and enjoy peas and brassicas.
- **High Pennines/Lakes:** treat as short, windy season, greenhouse is gold.
- **Isle of Wight:** very mild, early starts with wind shelter.

## Wales

- **South Coast:** mild with wind, stake well, great for salads and beans.
- **West:** wet and windy, airflow and slug control.
- **Uplands:** late frosts, short-season varieties.
- **North/Anglesey:** wind off the sea, low, sturdy plantings with mesh.

## Ireland

- **South & South-West:** long, mild season, fantastic for beans, salads, and early tomatoes with blight care.
- **East:** sunnier, drier, very good for roots and tomatoes.
- **West:** wet and windy, shelter and mildew management.
- **Midlands:** stable but damp, choose disease-resistant lines.
- **North/Donegal:** cooler, windy, early varieties and windbreaks.

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## Last mindful word

Growers succeed by noticing. Notice how your balcony, yard, or shared courtyard holds heat, funnels wind, or dries fast. The journal gives the map. Your notes make it yours.



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