

Suggestions for Sowing and Planting in August

For many of you this might have turned out to be one of the most challenging growing years of your lifetime. A late start in Spring, extreme weather oscillating between hot and cold, wet and dry and now a very mediocre prospect for Summer with cooler than usual temperatures and very little light with overcast skies and lots of damp conditions. We might even have spotted the first attacks of mildew on our courgettes and pumpkins and blight on tomatoes and potatoes? With wet conditions dominating and Full Moon on the horizon, ***I highly recommend*** to apply the horsetail preparation 508 in the next few days during dry spells in between all the showers and drizzles as a preventative. At the same time there is hope for another warm spell in September into October, which seems to be the pattern from the last two years.

So, what is it we can still sow and plant in August?

Nursery work, sowing & transplanting:

Cabbages, broccolis, and kale

Sow a few more cabbages now for harvesting next spring – in a temporary seedbed if you are tight for space, or even in pots or modules. They can be kept out of the way somewhere as long as you remember to cover them with nets or fleece to keep off birds and caterpillars. Brassicas sown now can be planted out in the early parts of autumn when space becomes available.

Transplanting

Transplant your spring cabbages, broccolis & kale sown earlier now in August & latest into early October. Whether you've raised them in pots or in a temporary seedbed, it's now time for them to move to their final growing positions if possible.

Make sure that they go into ground that has been well firmed down and composted.

Chicory

Continue sowing both sugarloaf and radicchio forms of chicory. They are hardy and should last well into the autumn and winter.

Japanese onions (Senshyu)

Right now is the time to start sowing seeds of these onions, either in trays for planting out in late September or directly in situ. These onions can survive temperatures down to minus 18°C (0°F)

What can we plant after summer crops of beetroot, carrots, turnips, radishes or after onions, garlic and lettuces?

Prepare the ground by working in 1 wheelbarrow (40Kg) of a well-rotted stage III compost per 4-8m², if possible.

Other Leaf vegetables

Now is your last chance to sow **Swiss chard, Spinach**, as well as most of the **Oriental leaves** such as mizuna, mibuna and komatsuna. But, only if it's not too hot. There are certain varieties of **spinach** that can be sown this month or next (September) for an autumn crop.

Lettuces and other salad crops

It's still just possible to sow **lettuces**, though they may not germinate if the weather is very hot. Wait with outdoor sowing, or use shading material, or sow indoor in a protected

environment if very hot outdoors (over 27o). Or sow a few late lettuces and other salad leaves for crops that should last into the winter, when heat has died down a bit. For late autumn and winter salads, continue to succession sow **rocket, land cress, corn salad,** and **winter purslane** to keep up supplies.

What can we plant after summer crops early cauliflower, cabbages, onions, garlic and lettuces? No compost application is necessary. Root vegetables will grow with the inherent, residual fertility.

Root vegetables

It really is now or never this year for sowing **carrots, turnips, winter radishes,** and – although it's not strictly speaking a root vegetable – **kohlrabi**.

Pigeons find **kohlrabi** seedlings irresistible and will strip the leaves completely unless you net them. So do slugs by the way.

Other Root vegetables

Sow your last batch of **beetroot** now. Late varieties of **carrots** and **turnips** can still go in next month (September [use Amsterdam forcing Nantes]).

Green Manures

As there is plenty of moisture in the ground this summer make sure that every inch of the garden not in use for cropping is under a green manure cover of mustard, phacelia or even a broadcasted crop of spinach for cleaning the ground with its saponins.

Good times

I suggest you make good use of the moist and cool weather for sowing root crops on the 9-11 August and plants of the lettuce family on the 5-6 August.

With the Mercury node coming up on the 30/31 July and the moon perigee, I'd avoid working the garden until Thursday 3rd August. Maybe a good excuse to get a few days of a holiday from your intense gardening year so far?

Happy days in the summer garden

Hans-Günther



