

HIGHLAND SEEDLINGS

Planting Guide



**FOR VEG SEEDLINGS BOUGHT FROM
OUR SHOP AT
WWW.VEGSEEDLINGS.CO.UK**

WWW.HIGHLANDSEEDLINGS.COM

Our veg seedlings come ready to be planted. Each plant has been grown by us from seed in the Scottish Highlands, successionaly from February to September.

Different plants have different requirements. If you grow them in containers, for example, you'll need to water more often than if you plant them in the ground. If you plant them in a polytunnel or greenhouse be sure to open the vents or door to let in fresh air as it can easily get too hot in there.

We grow our veg the 'no dig' way, which means we feed our soil with compost and manure, and grow up to three crops in the same spot each year - and we grow throughout the winter, too. Because our soil is so happy we plant our seedlings a bit closer together than is often advised, and we also interplant quick-growing crops while we're waiting for bigger ones to get ready.

This is a rough guide for what to do with our plants. In general, when you receive them unwrap them as soon as you can, and pop them in a shallow tray filled with water. Then plant them up the same day. It is normal for them to look a bit sad, droopy and squished, but they should bounce back quickly within a couple of days. Being transplanted is very stressful for plants.

When you receive your plants you can plant our seedlings straight in the ground or in pots outside, or wherever you intend to grow them. Be sure to protect with fleece or bubblewrap if frost is forecast in April and May. We sow different plants at different times to ensure that the growing conditions are perfect for them. You can see what we're sowing when by looking at our Sowing Schedule at www.highlandseedlings.com/resources.

There's a bit of blank space after each entry so that you can make some notes there.

Artichoke

Globe artichokes are perennials that may or may not produce heads in their first year. Plant them where you want them to grow for the next few years - with about 60cm space between plants. After they have flowered, cut down to the base and cover with mulch over winter to protect them.

Aubergine

Aubergines love sunshine and warmth, so unless you're in a very mild spot in the south of England then a greenhouse or polytunnel is a must - or a sitoutery. Our aubergines are supplied as small plants that need to be grown on in a pot - if you intend to keep them in a pot all summer then grow them in a 9inch pot, otherwise just grow them on in a 4inch pot until they're ready to plant into their final position. Once they are in place, provide a cane or string for support, and cut off the tip from the main stem when they reach 30-40cm. Leave c. 60cm space between plants.

French Beans

French Beans need plenty of room to grow - and support to do so! They can climb up to 1.8m high so give them tall canes to support them, and leave c. 40cm space between plants, though you can plant two beans to go up the same cane.

Runner Beans

Like French Beans, Runner Beans also need plenty of room and support, as they can also grow up to 1.8m and need tall canes to support them. Leave c. 40cm between canes, and plant up to 2 plants per cane.

Beetroot

Beetroot are versatile and both leaves and the root are delicious. We supply beetroot in clumps of 3-5 plants per clump - these are sowed together and meant for you to plant together. The roots will grow outward, and whenever one is the size you like you can twist it out and leave the others in the clump to continue growing. Leave c.

15cm between clumps if you are growing them that way, and 10cm between plants if you are growing them individually - you can leave less room if you are only growing them for the leaves.

Broad Beans

Broad Beans are really hardy and can withstand frosts - they're one of the earliest things we sow in spring. They grow to about 1.2m tall, and while they don't need a support like French and Runner Beans it is a good idea to prop them up with canes and a bit of string as they can flop over in windy areas. They produce long pods with up to 6 beans in each, best picked when they are green but feel firm and are just starting to go over. Inside the pod each bean has a white skin that can be quite bitter - peel them for delicious buttery-tasting beans that are great eaten raw or steamed. Leave about 30cm between plants.

Broccoli

Leave about 45cm between plants. The central head can go over very quickly, so harvest it as soon as it looks ready - cut it off and leave the plant in place because small shoots will appear and you can harvest them like purple sprouting broccoli florets. Both the leaves and stem of broccoli plants are delicious.

Brussels Sprouts

Sprouts are space hungry and need a long time to grow, but are worth it - and their leaves are tasty, too. Leave at least 50cm between plants and, if you're growing more than one row, 60cm between rows. They really enjoy being fertilised with manure, and may need a bit of that in about September. You might need to cover them with netting or mesh to stop birds and butterflies tucking into your plants.

Cabbage

We grow cabbages all year round, in both summer and winter. We often harvest them leaf by leaf like lettuce rather than waiting for a big cabbage head. Cabbage

are very susceptible to bird and butterfly/caterpillar damage, so be sure to protect your plants with mesh or netting to prevent that. They really love sunshine, and don't like to sit in damp hollows. Leave at least 30cm between plants.

Carrot

Carrots are a delight to grow - the leaves are tasty, too, and they get sweeter with frost. If you are looking to grow big straight carrots then mix your compost with sand and sow your carrots directly - any carrots that you transplant are much more likely to grow into wonky shapes (but we enjoy that!). Leave about 8cm between plants.

Cauliflower

Cauliflower need about 60cm of space between plants, and they are often munched by birds and butterflies/caterpillars, so cover them with mesh or netting if you can. They enjoy really fertile soil and sunshine, so feed them with manure. Their leaves can be eaten like cabbage.

Celery

Celery don't like to dry out so be sure to water them regularly. Leave about 20cm between plants. If you like your stems 'blanched' (white, that is), then earth them up like potatoes - the bits above the ground will grow green.

Chard

Chard is brilliant - does well all year round and will feed you throughout winter - they don't mind frost and will even thrive after snowfall. They're really pretty, too. Harvest leaf by leaf as and when you need - young leaves are excellent raw in salads, and bigger leaves behave much like spinach when cooked. Leave about 10cm between plants and keep picking leaves.

Chilli

Chillies are fickle and will not do well outside - a sunny windowsill is perfect for them, or a greenhouse/polytunnel. They do well in pots of 6-8 inches. For bushier plants cut off the top of the plant above the bottom 4-6 leaves. It's a good idea to help pollinate your chillies with a small paint brush - gently rub all the flowers with it in turn. You can overwinter chillies inside as houseplants but they don't always survive. Don't water them too much, but don't let the soil dry out either - droopy leaves will tell you when it's time to water.

Courgette

Courgettes can be grown outside and in polytunnels and greenhouses. Each plant will produce many flowers and courgettes, and for a long time, too - but they need quite a bit of space and are hungry plants and really benefit from a helping of manure or seaweed when you plant them out. Leave at least 60cm between plants - more if you have the room. They're very thirsty plants and enjoy regular watering, but don't like their leaves to get back, so water from underneath.

Cucumber

They are climbers and will need to be supported with sticks or string or netting. They can be grown outside but we would recommend growing them in a greenhouse or polytunnel, away from tomatoes if you can at all space them out. Pinch out the growing point when it reaches the roof. Pinch out the tips of sideshoots two leaves beyond a female flower (recognisable by tiny fruits behind flower). Pinch out the tips of flowerless sideshoots once they reach 60cm long. Leave at least 40cm between plants, and feed them with manure or rich compost, and water regularly - they are thirsty plants but don't like their leaves to get back, so water from below.

Kale

Kale is incredible - it just keeps going. You harvest it leaf by leaf and the flowers (and flower buds are edible, too). Leave about 40cm space between plants. Butterflies and caterpillars like to munch kale, and birds too, but we've found that plants often bounce back after they've been nibbled, so if you don't need the space leave the plants in and see what happens. Our kales tend to keep going all year and over winter, too - young leaves are brilliant raw as salad, and you can cook it like spinach, too. Mesh will protect from bird and butterfly damage. The curly-leaved kind with ragged edges tends to attract fewer pests.

Kohlrabi

Kohlrabis look like little spaceships, and both the bulb and the leaves are edible. Aim for bulbs about the size of a cricket ball and harvest the whole plant then - the skin is tough but the inside flesh is delicious. It stores well in the fridge for ages, and is brilliant roasted or grated into salad - add a bit of vinegar and you've got instant coleslaw! Leave about 15 cm between plants.

Lamb's Lettuce

Lamb's lettuce is delicious but a bit fickle - it often takes ages to get going and then bolts quickly when it gets warm, but its buttery flavour is very nice. It does ok in shaded areas. You can grow plants quite close together - about 3cm space between them is fine. You can harvest the leaves individually or just remove the whole plant when there's enough to eat. If you leave it to go flower you'll be rewarded with beautiful little white/blue flowers.

Leek

Leeks take a while to get there but are rewarding. We grow ours in multi-sowed clumps of 3-5 leek plants grown together, much like beetroot and onion. Harvest

your leek when it is the size you want - if you harvest them when they're smaller then the greens are delicious. Leave at least 10cm between plants/clumps.

Lettuce

We'd recommend harvesting all lettuces leaf by leaf rather than pulling out the whole plant - that way the plant keeps going and you're only taking what you're actually going to eat. We do this for all kinds of lettuce - oak, round, iceberg, saladbowl. Leave c. 5cm between plants if you are going to harvest the outer leaves regularly, but about 8cm if you're wanting to grow them into big heads to harvest in one go. Water regularly. Lettuce is surprisingly hardy and doesn't mind getting cold, and does quite well in shaded areas, too.

Mizuna and Mibuna

They are oriental greens and do well in colder periods. Grow them as 'cut and come again' salad leaves and harvest a few leaves whenever you'd like, but leave the plant in place to keep producing leaves. Leave c. 5cm between plants.

Mustard

Mustards are brilliant - spicy leaves that keep growing for a long time, and, if left to flower, mustard seeds that you can make mustard with. Grow like rocket, c. 5cm space between plants, and keep picking leaves whenever you like.

Onion

There are two ways of growing onions: from sets or from seeds. Sets are young onions that were harvested and that you are then able to replant for them to grow on. If you grow your own onions and they don't get as big as you like you can store them

in a dark cool place over winter and plant them out again in the spring. We grow our onions from seeds, usually 3-5 multisowed seeds in a clump, and we plant these out together. Whenever we want to harvest an onion we twist out the biggest one - for example, if we want spring onions we twist out an immature onion and leave the rest to get bigger. If you want to grow onions individually plant them out with about 8cm space between plants. For multisowed clumps leave about 12cm between clumps.

Parsnip

Like carrots, parsnips prefer to be sowed straight from seed, and if you transplant young plants you are much more likely to get strange shapes. This doesn't affect their taste, though! Leave about 8cm between plants, and be sure to water regularly.

Pea

Peas are so nice - you can eat their leaves, too. They are climbers and need to be supported with sticks, chicken wire, or twine strung up on a frame - they have tendrils with which they hold on to their support. They can grow up to 6ft tall (unless you grow a dwarf variety). Harvest young pods if you like to eat them whole, or leave to grow on into big juicy peas inside the pod. You can plant two pea plants in the same place to grow upwards, or space them out. Leave about 8-10cm between plants and they'll quickly fill in that space.

Pepper

Like chillies, peppers are fickle: they need a lot of heat and light, so a warm windowsill or a sitoutery are ideal, though they can do well in greenhouses and polytunnels, too. We would not recommend trying to grow peppers outside. They do well in pots of 6-8 inches. For bushier plants cut off the top of the plant above the bottom 4-6 leaves. It's a good idea to help pollinate your chillies with a small paint brush - gently rub all the flowers with it in turn. Water them regularly but sparingly.

Radish

Radish grow really quickly and only take about 6 weeks from sowing to harvest - in week 6 check every day because they quickly grow from marble to golf ball size! We multisow our radish and grow it in clumps of 3-5 plants - simply twist out the biggest radish when you're ready to harvest it. You can plant radish quite close together, about 3cm apart.

Rocket

Rocket plants keep giving leaves for a really long time, and you get a lot of leaves from one plant. If you see a flower stalk cut it off, and the plant should keep producing more leaves. Water regularly, and leave about 10-12cm apart. Harvest leaf by leaf rather than taking the whole plant in one go.

Spinach

Spinach does great in spring, autumn and winter, but bolts quickly in summer - the leaves are still tasty then, but get smaller and smaller. Spinach grows very quickly and if you don't harvest regularly you'll end up with leaves the size of your head! Leave about 7cm space between plants and be sure to harvest regularly. Spinach freezes well if you wilt it in a pan first.

Perpetual Spinach

Perpetual spinach (or 'spinach beet') really comes into its own in summer when proper spinach has bolted, and will keep going throughout the summer and autumn, and in mild years overwinter, too. Leave about 15cm space between plants, and water in a dry spell.

Squash/Pumpkin

Squash and pumpkin are hungry - they want space, warmth, water and rich soil. It's a good idea to add some seaweed or manure before you plant them, and if you're short of space think about training them up an arch or trellis, or even a small tree. Fruit might not ripen on the vine - cut them off when the weather turns in October, with about 10cm of stem still attached. Place on a sunny windowsill or greenhouse, and turn regularly so that they get sun from all sides. They'll ripen and should form a seal around the stem, and store all winter. The exception to this is 'patty pan' squash, which grows like a courgette. Leave at least 1m between plants, and direct their tendrils to where you'd like them to grow. Water regularly from below - they don't like to get their leaves wet.

Tomato

There are two types of tomato, cordon (indeterminate) and bush (determinate). Bush tomatoes are compact and do not need to be trained up sticks or twine - cordon tomatoes grow up to 6ft tall and need a support system. Tomatoes are very hungry and need to be watered regularly, and - once they have started to set fruit - it is a good idea to feed them with fertiliser made from nettle, comfrey or seaweed. You can grow them in pots of 6-8inches or growbags, or straight in the ground. In hot summers they'll do well outside, though a greenhouse or polytunnel is best. If you want to help them along, gently brush their flowers with a paintbrush, and shake the trusses to help pollinate the flowers.

Turnip

Turnips taste great roasted or boiled and mashed, and are at their best when golfball-sized. Grow either individually or in multisowed clumps of 3-5 plants, with 15-20cm space between plants or clumps. Give them plenty of water to help the roots grow juicy.