

September

Sow varieties of lettuce that have been specially developed for over-wintering under cloches.

Continue to lift potatoes and main-crop carrots. Store sound roots for future use. Do not leave these vegetables in the ground when they have reached their maximum growth for slugs and other pests can do much damage.

September can be the worst month for weeds, many of which are hurrying to ripen their seeds for the autumn winds to scatter. Remove them to the compost heap where the warmth generated by lawn mowings should destroy them. Vacant plots can be utilised by filling (but not overcrowding) them with cabbage, winter lettuce and spinach plants.

In dry spells, celery can be earthed up a few inches at a time. The stems will then be blanched. Plant out winter lettuce in land manured for a previous crop. On heavy soil it is advisable to plant on top of a slight ridge to avoid damping off. A further sowing of winter-hardy variety may be made.

Use parsley as required from the seedling rows, leaving strong plants standing about six inches apart. Cover them with cloches if the plot is exposed to cold winds in the winter.

If your garden is exposed, or in a frost-pocket, it is as well to prepare for a slight frost towards the end of the month. The risk is greatest during clear anti-cyclonic weather and the morning sun does the damage. Have polythene sheets or even newspaper handy to drape over tomatoes and peppers. They can be removed after an hour or so. Gather ripened marrows for storage in a dry place.

Sow lamb's lettuce or corn salad. This is an invaluable salad which can be used during the early spring when lettuces are scarce and expensive. Cut like spinach.

Ken Whyatt 1980

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Few gardeners will have any great opinion of September sowings, yet there are some things to be done in that way very advantageous. Everyone concerned in providing for a table knows the value of spring carrots; the earlier they are brought in the greater is their value and this is one of those things that should be attempted by sowing in September. The chance of hard weather is against them but this is a risk the gardener must run who would take the advantage of the first season. For this purpose choose a well sheltered and warm bed. Sow beans and peas twice. If they escape the severity of winter they will yield very early crops. Taking the two opportunities a fortnight apart one of the two, if not both, may succeed. Sow also young salading and lettuce for the family. Cabbage lettuces are hardiest, but cos are the most valued. Sow mixed seed, let them take their chance together. Cover some with glass. Plant out the last sowing of broccoli and of cauliflower. The coleworts, lettuces and endive sown in July should also be transplanted. On a dry day tie up the leaves with string. Earth each plant up but take care not to bury the heart for then it will decay. Celery that was planted out early should also be earthed up at this time.

Martha Bradley 1756