

CNAA - Vegetable Variety Guide 2007

In 2004 members of the Cottonmill and Nunnery Allotment Association completed a survey about which vegetables grow best on their allotments. This survey was repeated in Autumn 2007 and the combined results are presented here.

	How well does it grow?	What varieties are recommended ?	Comments
Artichoke	Excellent	Globe : Green* Purple*	Benefit from yearly feeding, low maintenance but need protection from heavy frosts
	Excellent	Jerusalem: Fuseau*	Prolific, very low maintenance
Asparagus	Excellent	Conrovers Colossal* Franklin F1 Gijnlim	Excellent cropping and very tasty. Important to remove all perennial weeds before planting. It grows better on light soil and benefits from feeding/manuring.
Broad Beans	Excellent	Autumn: Aquadulce*	Grow well, excellent flavour and they freeze very well. Young plants need protection from pigeons and beware of blackfly infestations. Susceptible to rust. Autumn sowings can have a lot of failures, so Spring indoor and outdoor sowings are recommended.
	Excellent	Spring : Sutton* Masterpiece*	
French / Climbing Beans	Okay - Excellent	Barlotta*, Blue lake*, Cobra*, Sprite*, Annabel, Purple teepee / king / queen, Tendergreen and Heritage varieties	Good croppers and great flavour. Benefit from good soil and plenty of water but need frequent cropping.
Runner beans	Excellent	Enorma* Polestar* Lay Di Prizewinner Scarlet emperor	Vigorous growth and prolific cropping. Harvest over a very long period, low maintenance but do benefit from feeding and watering. A real favourite on the plots. Young plants need protecting from slugs and bad weather
Beetroot	Okay	Boltardy*, Detroit* 2, Bulls blood, Pablo F1, Tardell	Easy to grow, reliable and very tasty. Boltardy are quite small, but very popular. Leaves can also be eaten
Broccoli	Okay	Early and late purple sprouting*, Calabrese*, Crown & sceptres, Romanesco	Good crops from large, strong plants. Tasty and very good for you! Beware aphids, stake plants to help prevent wind damage and netting is a must to avoid pigeon damage!
Brussels sprouts	Okay	Cascade*, Amaroso, Braveheart, Wellington	Reliable, tasty and crop well. Need staking and netting.
Cabbage	Poor	Savoy*, Durham early, Greyhound, Offenham flower of spring, Stonehead	Low maintenance and crop well. Stonehead good for coleslaw and spring cabbages can be harvested for either greens or cabbage. Beware pigeons and flea beetle!
Carrots	Poor - Okay	Autumn king* Early nantes* Flyaway* Chantenay royal, James scarlet intermediate, Parano F1, Resistafly, Sugarsnax F1	Flyaway and resistafly appear to be unattractive to carrot flies. Grow other varieties between rows of onions or protect them from carrot flies using polythene or enviromesh. Also need protecting from slugs. All varieties taste fantastic and crop well. Grow better in light soils or sand.

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Cauliflower	Poor	None	Need fertile soil and beware slugs
Celery / Celeriac	Ok	Green celery varieties	Needs good soil. Celery poor , celeriac easy to grow but small crops
Chicory	Okay	Witloof	Unusual and tasty winter crop
Courgette / Marrow	Excellent	All green bush* Defender* Nero di milano* Jemmer, Tristar	Amazingly vigorous and prolific all summer long! Low maintenance, few problems but they do benefit from feeding and regular watering.
Cucumber	Excellent Excellent	Indoor: Slice king* Cucino Telegraph Outdoor: Burpless* Crystal lemon	Very vigorous and prolific either in greenhouse or outdoors. F1 varieties seem to be easier to grow and crop better. Mini-cucumbers are ideal and Crystal lemon is a prolific novelty.
Garlic	Excellent	Solent Wight* Thermidore* Elephant, Marco	Very tasty, produce a good crop and store very well. Plant early if you want large bulbs. Susceptible to rust.
Kale / Borecole	Excellent	Nero Di Toscana*, Winterbor , Redbor	Strong, hardy plants which pigeons aren't very interested in. Good to eat, very nutritious and low maintenance. Nero Di Toscana is especially tasty.
Leeks	Excellent	Musselburgh* Atlanta, Jolant, Laura, the Lyon	Good, hardy winter crop which can be left in the ground until you need it. Tasty and versatile in the kitchen. Prone to rust
Lettuce	Excellent	Cut & come again* Little gem* Lollo rosso * Marvel of 4 seasons* Tom Thumb* Cos, Oakleaf, Winter density	Usually grow very well, but regular successional sowings are needed if you want a constant supply all summer long. Slugs love them, but they are less keen on the red leafed varieties. Cut & come again varieties are easy to grow and crop prolifically.
Onions	Excellent Okay Excellent	White: Senshyu* Setton* Stuttgarden Red: Red baron Shallots	Grow best in hot, dry summers so did badly in 2007. Usually low maintenance and crop well. Sets are more reliable than seed. Reds great in salads. All benefit from regular weeding.
Maincrop potatoes			General: grow well on our plots but are susceptible to blight and slug damage. Take note of the recommended varieties below. Red tubers seem less attractive to slugs.
	Excellent	Desiree*	Red, good crops and good slug resistance
	Excellent	Pink fir apple*	Good yield, unusual knobbly tubers with a new potato taste. Store well.
	Excellent	Cara*	Good cropper and some blight resistance
	Excellent	Remarka, Romano	Red, good crops and very tasty
	Excellent	Maris piper, Sante	White, good crops and very tasty
	Excellent	Sarpo mira	Red, excellent blight and slug resistance
New potatoes			General: grow very well on our plots. Too early for blight and are far less susceptible to slug damage.
	Excellent	Charlotte*	Crops well, can be left in the ground for ages, very tasty and slug resistant
	Excellent	Kestrel*	Great flavour, grow quickly, good crops and store well
	Excellent	Accent, Arran pilot, Orla, Nichola, Rocket	Plenty of small, but tasty tubers. Rocket is especially early.

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Parsnip	Okay	Avonresister* Tender & true* Gladiator Hollow crown	Tricky to germinate (unless you use the toilet roll method) and they benefit from fine, light soil. Crop very well and taste superb. But they are susceptible to canker
Peas	Generally okay	Kelvedon wonder* Oregon sugar pod* Alderman, Carouby de Maussane, Feltham first, Greenshaft	Generally do okay but crops are very variable. You need many plants for a good crop and successional sowing helps, but they taste wonderful. Susceptible to rust and pigeons absolutely love them! Mange tout varieties seem easier to grow
Peppers	Okay Excellent	Capsicum Chilli	Capsicums ok in greenhouse, but need a long, hot summer for success. Chilli's are much more successful - it's very easy to grow a years supply!
Pumpkin / Squash	Excellent	Butternut* Potimarron* Turks turban* Vegetable spaghetti* Atlantic giant, Bon-bon, Crown prince, Heavyweight, Jack O'lantern, Marina di chioggia, Queensland Blue, Sweet dumpling, Uchiki Kuri	Very vigorous and crop well. Low maintenance, no problems and the more you water them the bigger the crop. Great for soups, stews, roasting or for carving at Halloween! Butternut very tasty and veg spaghetti great fun to eat! Atlantic giant pumpkins can grow to an enormous size and Turks turbans just look so cool!
Radish	Excellent	French breakfast* Mirabelle Scarlet globe	Simple and very quick to grow. Need to sow regularly. They add spice to summer salads. Prone to flea beetle attack, but plants seem to survive ok.
Rocket	Okay	Wild rocket*	Potentially excellent taste and crops – but can be decimated by flea beetle. For good crops, plant successionaly under fleece or enviromesh
Spinach / beet / chard	Excellent	Perpetual beet* Rainbow chard* Atlanta, Bright lights, Medania, Swiss chard	Unlike spinach, perpetual beet and chards are not prone to bolting and grow vigorously. Low maintenance and give good crops all year round.
Spring onion	Poor/Okay	White lisbon* Deep purple, Welsh everlasting	Can be tricky to grow and they need regular weeding, but taste great
Swede	Poor	Marian*	Difficult to grow, small crops and pigeons and flea beetles love them!
Sweetcorn	Excellent Poor/Okay	Kelvedon glory* Supersweet varieties* Tuxedo* Sweet nugget* Sundance, Tasty gold Mini-sweetcorn	Need plenty of sun, so do better in hot summers. Very sweet and tasty - miles better than shop bought! Strong plants and good crops with few problems. Unfortunately loved by local rodents! Difficult to harvest at the correct size
Tomatoes (greenhouse)	Excellent (normally!)	Moneymaker* Alicante, Big boy Ferline, Heritage varieties, Sungold, Stoners' exhibition, Tigerella	Very large crops of tasty fruit. Leaf mould and blight can be a big problem. Ferline shows good resistance to blight. Tip: grow Tagetes in the greenhouse to deter whitefly and other pests

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Tomatoes (outdoor)	Okay (but 2007 was a disastrous year!)	Gardeners' delight* Ferline, Harbinger, Marmande, Roma	Outdoor tomatoes need a hot summer to do well and can be decimated by blight, as in 2007. Gardeners' delight crops very well and is, in many people's opinion, the tastiest tomato variety. Ferline shows good resistance to blight.
Turnip	Poor	Purple milan	Tricky to grow. Loved by both pigeons and flea beetles!

Key : * most commonly recommended varieties

Our members favourite vegetables grown on their plots

- **Asparagus** – Not an easy crop to cultivate, but tastes great eaten soon after picking. They are an early crop and herald the start of good things to come each year. Expensive in the shops.
- **Asparagus pea** - unusual, pest-free (even pigeons leave them alone), taste good and very pretty.
- **Calabrese and sprouting broccoli** - easy to grow, expensive in the shops, very tasty and help bridge that Spring hungry-gap. Versatile in the kitchen and sprouting broccoli freezes well.
- **Carrots** - the taste is superb, bought ones really don't taste anywhere near as good. They seem to grow very well on our soil, but beware of carrot fly and slugs!
- **Charlotte new potatoes** - virtually maintenance free, slugs cause very little damage and they can last you through the summer and autumn. They taste great and command a premium price in the supermarket. But beware of late frosts!
- **Courgettes** – very easy to grow and they crop all summer long. If you miss any they just keep on growing until they become marrows!
- **Florence fennel** - delicious, attractive to look at, easy to grow, yet expensive in the shops
- **Globe artichoke** – a beautiful structural plant to look at, it's easy to grow and great to eat. Also gives a home to ladybirds and attracts aphids from other crops without detriment to the plant!
- **Perpetual beet** - hard to beat if you're looking for a low maintenance, easy to grow, nutritious, tasty and all year round crop from your plot.
- **Runner beans** - delicious straight from the plot and they're so easy to grow. They always give a very good crop and can be picked all summer long.
- **Squashes** - very vigorous plants which seem to grow whilst you watch them! Wide variety of spectacular fruits which brighten up the plot, store well and taste good.
- **Sweetcorn** – a far superior flavour to shop bought, especially if eaten soon after picking
- **Sweet potato** – fantastic flavour , crop well but are very expensive in the shops
- **Tomatoes** - for their heavy crops and 'real' flavour in summer salads and the reminder of summer sunshine when I open my winter cupboard stacked high with jars of pulp for pasta sauces.
- **Vegetable spaghetti** - easy to grow, gives good crops and is so much fun to eat!