



Seasonal Vegetables in Scotland

Exploring STEM, culture, health &
wellbeing and sustainability.



❄️ WINTER ❄️



January



Time to Plan, Not Plant

January is usually the **coldest month of the year**, so it's best to **hold off planting seeds outdoors** for now. Instead, use this time to **plan your planting** for the year ahead - think about what you'd like to grow and where you might plant it.

Most crops won't cope well with **frost and snow**, and only the **hardest varieties** can survive the winter chill. If you've still got **carrots in the ground**, make sure to **cover them with a layer of straw**, which acts like a warm blanket, protecting them from frosts. Carrots keep better under straw than if you than if you harvest them.

Discover Veggie STEM

In January **potatoes are being graded**. The latest **potato grading technology** uses a combination of **mechanical systems, computer vision, and artificial intelligence** to sort potatoes based on **size, shape, weight, and quality**. Some farmers now have **high-speed cameras and sensors** that capture images of each potato, these are then analysed using **machine learning algorithms** to detect **defects, blemishes, or irregularities**. **Conveyor systems and automated sorters** physically separate the potatoes into different **grades**, ensuring **consistency and efficiency in packaging and distribution**.



In the school garden

Sow

cress
mustard
parsley (indoors)



Harvest

lettuce
leeks
swedes
parsnips



Other jobs

- Prepare soil
- Add compost if conditions allow
- Keep over-wintering crops protected from frost
- Cut autumn raspberry canes to the ground
- Choose crops for the year ahead and order seeds



What's in season?

January is a busy time for **harvesting winter vegetables**. Seasonal favourites like **beetroot, swedes, parsnips, leeks, and carrots** are being gathered from the fields, bringing fresh, local produce to our tables even in the coldest months.

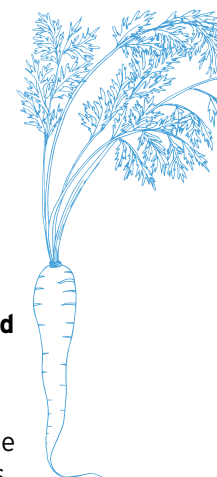


Exploring food – British Parsnips

British-grown parsnips are available in shops for around **11 months of the year**, with the **new season** crop arriving from **July**. Interestingly, **cold frosts** actually **enhance the sweet flavour** of this root vegetable, making winter parsnips especially tasty!

Before planting, farmers carefully prepare the soil to make sure it's **free of stones and lumps**. This helps prevent the roots from becoming **forked or oddly shaped**.

Parsnips are quite delicate to grow. Because they can be affected by soil-borne diseases, farmers usually **wait 7 to 10 years** before growing them again in the same field. They also often need **irrigation** to make sure the roots grow big, straight, and full of flavour.



Health & wellbeing

Parsnips are a nutritious root vegetable packed with health benefits.

They are a source of **fibre, vitamin C, vitamin K, potassium and manganese**.

Parsnips are naturally low in calories and fat, making them a healthy addition to a balanced diet.



Parsnip and apple soup

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- 4 parsnips, chopped into cubes
- 1 Bramley apple, skinned, cored and chopped into cubes
- 1 tablespoon clear honey
- 2 tablespoons single cream
- ground black pepper
- 1 vegetable stock cube

Equipment

- Tablespoon
- Chopping board
- Sharp chopping knife
- Garlic crush (if available)
- Jug
- Medium sized pan
- Kettle

1. Gently fry the onion and garlic in olive oil for 5 minutes then add the chopped parsnips and apple. Fry for a further 5 minutes, stirring to prevent browning.
2. Make up the vegetable stock by adding your stock cube to a jug with 600ml boiling water.
3. Add the vegetable stock to the pan with the other ingredients.
4. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15-20 minutes until the vegetables are tender.
5. Blend the soup until smooth.
6. Stir in the honey and single cream.
7. Season the soup with black pepper. Serve piping hot.



Sustainability

Don't Peel Away the Goodness

When preparing vegetables like **parsnips**, it's best to **give them a good wash rather than peeling them**. That's because many of the **nutrients are found just beneath the skin**, and peeling can remove some of that natural goodness.

If you do decide to peel them, don't let the skins go to waste! **Toss them with a little rapeseed oil and your favourite spices**, then **roast them in the oven until crispy**. They make a tasty, healthy alternative to crisps or a crunchy topping for salads and soups.



❄️ WINTER ❄️



February



Temperatures may start to rise this month, depending on where you live in Scotland and it's a good time to **begin planting some early crops under cover**. It's also the perfect month to **finish up your garden planning** and get your seeds ordered. Keep in mind that your location plays a big role – the further north you are the longer the frosts tend to stick around, which can affect when you get started.

Discover Veggie STEM

Spreading **manure and slurry** is an important part of growing all crops. Farmers use special machinery and soil mapping to spread or inject these natural fertilisers where they are required. Manures can help improve soil health and both manure and slurry support crop growth, while making the most of farm waste. There are strict rules in place to make sure this is done safely – especially when it comes to growing vegetables. For example, farmers must wait a certain amount of time, sometimes up to two years, between spreading manure or slurry and planting certain types of vegetables. During this waiting period, they can use artificial (inorganic) fertilisers instead. The rules also ban spreading manure on frozen ground or in areas where it could wash into rivers or streams.



In the school garden

Sow



broad beans
peas
radish
chit potatoes

Harvest



leeks
lettuce
parsnips
swedes

Other jobs



- Prepare soil
- Add compost if conditions allow
- Cut autumn raspberry canes to the ground
- Warm soil ahead of sowing with fleece or plastic
- Continue to plant bare-rooted fruit trees and bushes



Health and Wellbeing

Brussels sprouts are a nutritious vegetable. They're rich in **vitamin C** and **vitamin K**, which support your immune system and bone health. They also contain **fibre**, which helps with digestion and **antioxidants** that may protect against certain diseases. Low in calories and full of goodness, Brussels sprouts are a great addition to a healthy, balanced diet.

What's in season?

February sees winter vegetables like **beetroot, swedes, parsnips, leeks, carrots, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, and broccoli** all being harvested.



Exploring food – Brilliant Brussels Sprouts

Brussels sprouts grow well in Scotland because **they like cool, damp weather**. They take a long time to grow and are usually planted in spring and ready to harvest in late autumn or winter. You'll often see them in the fields standing tall with lots of little green sprouts growing up the stem like buttons.

Farmers have to be patient with sprouts, but the wait is worth it, especially around Christmas when they are a traditional part of a British Christmas dinner. Like parsnips, **sprouts also taste sweeter after a frost**.





Pasta with sprouts and bacon

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons Scottish rapeseed oil
- 200g smoked bacon, chopped into cubes
- 2 Scottish onions, finely chopped
- 320g Scottish Brussels sprouts, finely sliced
- 4 teaspoons garlic puree
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 300g pasta

Equipment

- Pan with lid
- Frying pan
- Chopping board
- Sharp knife
- Wooden spoon
- Teaspoon

1. Cook pasta in the pan with a lid, drain and set aside, leaving the lid on the pan.
2. Add the oil to the frying pan and heat.
3. Once warm add the garlic puree.
4. Cook for 1 minute stirring constantly.
5. Add the sliced Brussels sprouts and chopped bacon. Cook over medium heat for 5–8 minutes.
6. Add cooked pasta to Brussels sprouts and bacon. Sprinkle with paprika and mix well.
7. Serve warm.



Sustainability

Eat vegetables of all shapes and sizes!

When preparing **Brussels sprouts**, try to use as much of the sprout as possible. You only need to trim the very **base** of each sprout and remove any **damaged outer leaves** – the rest is all **edible**. Don't throw away sprouts just because they're a bit **small** or slightly **marked**; they still taste great and are full of **nutrients**. If you have **leftover cooked sprouts**, don't bin them – they can be added to **stir-fries, bubble and squeak**, or even blended into **soups**. Buy sprouts on the stalk and put the end of the stalk in a jar of water so they keep longer.



SPRING

March



In the school garden

Sow

garlic & onion
(suited to spring planting)
broad beans
leeks
peas
radish
spinach
lettuce
carrots
potatoes
parsnip

Harvest

salads
(if protected)
leeks
chard

Other jobs

- Dig soil and add compost if conditions allows
- Support peas with pea sticks

What's in season?

March sees winter vegetables (**beetroot, swedes, parsnips, leeks and carrots**) being harvested and **peas and beans** being planted.

Exploring food – Lovely Leeks

Leeks grow well in Scotland because they **don't mind the cold** and can stay in the ground through the autumn and winter. They're planted in spring and take a few months to grow nice and tall. Leeks are part of the same family as onions and garlic, but they have a **milder, sweeter taste**. You can **eat the whole leek**, not just the white part – so nothing goes to waste!



Discover Veggie STEM

Ploughing a field for vegetable planting in Scotland involves modern **agricultural technology** that helps prepare the soil efficiently and sustainably. Most farmers now use **GPS-guided tractors** to ensure straight, even rows and minimal soil disruption. There are even some **automated ploughs** available. Some of these systems also collect **soil data** to help farmers make better decisions about when and how to plough, supporting healthier crops and more efficient farming.



Health and Wellbeing

Leeks are a source of **vitamins like A, C, and K**, and they help keep your heart healthy and your immune system strong.

SPRING

March



Sautéed Leeks

Ingredients

- 2 whole leeks, finely sliced
- 2 tablespoons of Scottish rapeseed oil
- 2 teaspoons garlic puree
- Salt and pepper to taste

Equipment

- Chopping board
- Sharp knife
- Tablespoon
- Teaspoon
- Wooden spoon
- Frying pan

1. Add the oil to the pan and heat.
2. Once warm add the garlic puree.
3. Cook for 1 minute stirring constantly.
4. Add the sliced leeks.
5. Cook over a medium heat for 5-8 minutes stirring regularly until the leeks are soft.
6. Serve immediately.



Sustainability

Use as much of the vegetable as you can.

Try and use all parts of your vegetables when cooking. With a leek the whole leek is edible - not just the white bit. **Try not to throw away parts you can eat.** The only bits you usually need to cut off are the very ends or anything that's gone bad.



SPRING

April



In the school garden

What's in season?

April is the month when the planting season really gets underway – but look out for **late frosts** which can undo all your hard work. If you have a greenhouse, make sure you **give the glass a clean** so that there is plenty of light getting in. You can also make use of cold frames and windowsills to get some of the more tender crops started. As **the soil warms up**, the planting of early and main crop potatoes begins.

Discover Veggie STEM

Farmers or growers collect soil samples and test them in a lab to measure key factors like **nutrient levels, pH, and organic matter**. Advanced tools like **GPS mapping** and **digital soil sensors** help pinpoint problem areas in a field. This scientific approach allows for **precise fertiliser use** and better crop planning, leading to healthier vegetables, more sustainable farming and being better for the environment.

Sow

garlic & onion
(suited to spring planting)
broad beans
leeks
peas
radish
spinach
lettuce
carrots
potatoes
parsnip

Harvest

salads
spinach
leeks
final parsnips

Other jobs

- Prepare seedbeds for sowing, mulch around plants with compost
- Put in supports for climbing plants such as beans and peas
- Grow carrots under fleece to protect from carrot fly

In April, the **last of the winter vegetables** are being harvested – **beetroot, swedes, parsnips, leeks and carrots**. Vegetables like **peas, beans and carrots** are being planted.



Exploring food – Super Spinach

Spinach grows really well in the UK, especially in cooler months like spring and autumn. Spinach is **a fast-growing leafy green** that you can grow in gardens, pots, or even window boxes.

Health and Wellbeing

Spinach is a source of **vitamins A, C, and K**, as well as **iron** and **fibre**, which help keep your body strong, your eyes sharp, and your immune system working well. You can eat it raw in salads or cooked in meals like pasta, soups, and smoothies.





SPRING



April



THE JOURNEY OF FOOD

**The Story
of Vegetables**



Vegetable pizza

Ingredients

For the base:

- 225g strong British plain flour
- 1 x 7g sachet easybake (microfine) yeast
- 1 tablespoon Scottish rapeseed oil
- 150ml warm water

For the topping:

- Tube of tomato puree
- 1 teaspoon of garlic puree
- 250-300g spinach leaves - stalks removed and lightly steamed
- ½ red pepper – deseeded, chopped
- 150g of grated Scottish cheddar cheese (or 100-150g sliced or torn Mozzarella cheese)
- 2 Scottish tomatoes – thinly sliced
- basil leaves – torn

Equipment

- Sharp knife
- Chopping board
- Mixing bowl
- Measuring scales
- Jug
- Wooden spoon
- Rolling pin
- Baking tray
- Desert spoon
- Spatula

1. Put the flour and yeast in the mixing bowl.
2. Add the water and oil and mix to a soft dough with a wooden spoon.
3. Knead the dough until smooth.
4. Roll it out to a 20-25cm round, then place the round on the baking tray.
5. Heat the oven to 220°C/ Gas 7.
6. Spread the tomato puree over the base using the back of a spoon.
7. Scatter the garlic, spinach, pepper and tomatoes over the dough base.
8. Leave the pizza to stand for 5-10 minutes.
9. Bake for 15-20 minutes until the cheese has melted and (when lifted with a spatula) you can see that the pizza base has cooked.
10. Serve warm, cut into slices.



Sustainability

Bring limp veg back to life

Making a spinach salad? **Only add dressing to the portion you're eating** – that way, you can keep any leftovers fresh for the next day. If your spinach leaves start to wilt don't throw them out! They can still be used in soups or casseroles. If your spinach is looking a bit limp **try soaking it in iced water for about 30 minutes** to bring it back to life.



SPRING

May



May is often the month when the **first crops** of the year start to appear (depending where you are located). If you use **successional planting** – sowing seeds at different times – you can enjoy a **steady supply** of produce instead of everything being ready at once. Since **farming is highly weather-dependent**, some farmers may still be **planting potatoes** if April was particularly **cold**. This is also the month when crops like **peas, beans, and carrots** are commonly planted.

In the school garden

Sow

radish
French beans
lettuce
carrots



Other jobs

- Mulch plants with compost and keep well-watered
- Keep carrots covered with fleece to protect from carrot fly



Harvest

radish	lettuce and other salads
broad beans	spinach
carrots	



Discover Veggie STEM

Vegetable growing in **vertical farms** uses advanced **science and technology** to produce food in stacked layers indoors, often without soil. Plants are grown under **LED lights** that mimic sunlight, and their growth is carefully controlled using **climate control systems** for temperature, humidity, and light. **Hydroponic systems** deliver water and nutrients directly to the roots, using far less water than traditional farming. **Sensors and data tools** monitor plant health in real time, making vertical farming a highly efficient, sustainable way to grow fresh leafy vegetables all year-round.



Health and Wellbeing

Potatoes are a good source of **vitamin C**, which supports the immune system and **potassium**, which helps maintain healthy blood pressure. Potatoes also provide **fibre**, especially when eaten with the skin, which aids digestion and helps you feel fuller for longer. Naturally low in fat and salt they can be a healthy part of a balanced diet when prepared simply, such as boiled, baked, or steamed.

What's in season?

May brings the first signs of the new growing season, and some tasty **vegetables** are ready to enjoy. **Salad leaves, radishes, and spring onions** grow quickly and are often the first to be **harvested**. You might also see early crops of **spinach, chard, and new season baby carrots**. If the weather has been warm enough, **asparagus** might also be available.

Exploring food - Perfect Potatoes

Scotland's cool climate makes it ideal for growing **potatoes**. Potatoes grown for eating are known as '**ware**' **potatoes**, and we also grow **seed potatoes**, which are used to grow future crops. In fact **Scotland supplies most of the seed potatoes** used across the **UK** and is a **leading exporter** of them **worldwide**. Potatoes are grouped by when they're **harvested** – starting with **early potatoes**, followed by **main crop** and then **late varieties**. There's also a wide range of **types** to suit different **cooking needs**. Some are **waxy**, some **fluffy**, and others **smooth**. **Waxy new potatoes**, for example, are perfect for **potato salads**.



SPRING

May



Potato Salad

Ingredients

- Your harvested potatoes; cooked, cooled and chopped into cubes or a bag of potatoes
- Mayonnaise or salad cream (you will need enough to lightly coat the cooked potatoes)
- Chives (washed and finely chopped)

Equipment

- Chopping boards
- Pan
- Sharp knife
- Mixing bowl
- 1 spoon
- Scissors

1. Wash all your harvested potatoes. You can then divide the potatoes amongst your pupils. If there are not enough for each child you will need to buy a few extra (waxy potatoes are best for potato salad)
2. Using the bridge and claw method, demonstrate how to cut a potato into cubes.
3. Add all the cut potato cubes to a pan(s).
4. Cook and allow potato cubes to cool.
5. Put your cooled cooked potatoes into a bowl, and add the mayonnaise or salad cream a little at a time.
6. Use the scissors to chop up the chives into small pieces, directly into the bowl with the potatoes and mayonnaise / salad cream.
7. Stir everything carefully together (you can add more mayonnaise/salad cream if required).
8. Serve with crusty wholemeal rolls or bread.



Sustainability

Make the most of left overs

Potatoes don't freeze well in their raw or cooked form, but **mashed potato can be frozen** and enjoyed later. So instead of letting leftover potatoes go to waste, try making mash and popping it in the freezer for another day – it's a simple way to cut down on food waste.





SUMMER



June



Summer is here and we need to make sure that plants are **kept well watered** and protected from diseases. If the weather is good and crops are growing well, the pea and bean harvest begins. In Ayrshire farmers start harvesting their very special early potatoes.

Discover Veggie STEM

Companion planting means growing different types of plants next to each other to help keep pests away. For example, planting **carrots with mint**. The strong scent of one plant can **hide the smell** of the other, making it harder for pests to find the plants they usually feed on.



Health and Wellbeing

Carrots are rich in **beta-carotene**, which the body turns into **vitamin A** – essential for good vision, immune function, and healthy skin. Carrots also provide **fibre**, which supports digestion, and are naturally low in fat and calories. Enjoyed raw or cooked, carrots are a great way to add colour, crunch, and nutrition to your meals.

In the school garden

Sow

peas
carrots



Harvest

radish
French beans
broad beans
peas
onion
garlic
carrot
spinach
early potatoes
lettuce and other salads
strawberries



Other jobs

- Tender plants started indoors, such as French beans, pumpkins and squash should be planted out
- Mulch plants with compost and keep well-watered
- Keep carrots covered with fleece to protect from carrot fly



What's in season?

June is a great time for lots of **vegetables** like new **potatoes, peas, lettuce, and cabbage**. **Baby carrots, beetroot, and broccoli** are also in season and full of vitamins to keep you healthy. June is the peak time to enjoy the flavour of these **local** and **seasonal** veggies.



Exploring Food - Crunchy Carrots

Carrot farmers in Scotland grow their crops in **well-drained sandy soils**. **Carrot seeds** are very small and are planted using **precise machinery**. Once the young plants start growing, farmers monitor for **carrot fly**, a common **pest**, and spray if needed. Carrots can be picked early as **"green tops"**, which are small carrots with their **leaves** still attached, or left in the ground to grow to **full size**. Most full-size carrots have their **tops removed** and are **cleaned** before being sent to stores. Carrots are harvested all year round somewhere in the UK and will arrive in shops within just a few days of having been in the ground.





SUMMER



June



Crunchy Coleslaw

Ingredients

- ½ Scottish cabbage white or red shredded
- 2 Scottish carrots grated
- ½ Scottish red onion finely chopped
- 1 apple grated
- 2 dessertspoons sultanas
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 dessertspoon wholegrain mustard
- Salt and pepper

Equipment

- Chopping board
- Chopping knife
- Grater
- Selection of spoons
- Large mixing bowl
- Small mixing bowl

1. Prepare the cabbage, carrots, onion and apple, adding them in turn to the large mixing bowl.
2. Add the sultanas and mix together.
3. In the small mixing bowl, mix the mayonnaise and mustard.
4. Pour this mix over the chopped fruit and vegetables.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste.
6. Give everything a good stir to coat in the dressing.
7. Eat and enjoy.



Sustainability

Making the most of carrots

Try using **every part** of the carrot, not just the **orange root**! The **green tops** are **edible** and can be added to **soups**, **salads**, or made into tasty **pesto**. If your carrots start to go **soft**, don't throw them away – you can **cook** them in **stews**, **roast** them, **blend** them into **smoothies**, grate them into **porridge** or even make a **carrot cake**. If you have **leftover cooked carrots**, **save** them for another meal instead of **binning** them.





SUMMER



July



July is a busy month for farmers, as the warm summer weather helps **many vegetables ripen**. Some vegetables like peas, broad beans, and beetroot are being harvested. Farmers may also **need to irrigate** (water) some vegetables like carrots and potatoes. There is also the ongoing task of keep on top of weeds to help vegetables like cabbages, leeks and broccoli grow strong for later in the year.

In the school garden

Sow

peas
lettuce



Other jobs

- Mulch plants with compost and keep well-watered
- Keep carrots covered with fleece to protect from carrot fly



Harvest

radish	carrot
French beans	spinach
broad beans	early potatoes
peas	lettuce and other salads
onion	strawberries
garlic	



Discover Veggie STEM

About **95% of large-scale vegetable crops** are watered using **big hose-reel systems** that take water from nearby **rivers** or **underground sources**. Farmers need a licence to do this.

With **climate change** making weather less predictable, more farmers may start using **smarter irrigation methods** – like **drip systems** or **sprinklers** that are controlled by **soil moisture sensors** and **weather forecasts**. These technologies help make sure crops get just the right amount of water, which **reduces waste** and helps plants **grow well**. However, they are **expensive** to set up.



Health and Wellbeing

Peas are a source of **protein, fibre, and vitamins**, making them a valuable part of a **balanced diet**. By choosing **Scottish-grown peas**, you can support **local farmers** and protect the **environment**.

What's in season?

Fresh vegetables like **carrots, peas, broad beans, beetroot, and early potatoes** are ready to be picked. You'll also see **cabbages, cauliflower, lettuce**, and other **leafy greens** growing in the fields.

Exploring Food – Vining Peas

Vining peas are a popular and **sustainable crop** grown in **Scotland**, especially during the **summer months**. They thrive in the **cool, temperate climate** and are often **harvested in July**, when they are **sweet and full of flavour**. From a **sustainability** point of view, peas are a great choice – they **naturally add nitrogen to the soil**, which helps improve **soil health** and reduces the need for **additional nitrogen fertilisers**. They can do this as they have lumps on their roots called **nodules**, these house special bacteria that can take the nitrogen from the air and convert it into a form the plant can use.





SUMMER



July



Green pea hummus

Ingredients

- 450g frozen peas, thawed
- ¼ cup Scottish rapeseed oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic paste
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Salt and freshly cracked black pepper

To serve

- Scottish carrot batons or bread cubes

Equipment

- Large plastic bowl
- Couple of small plastic bowls
- Plastic beaker
- Tablespoon
- Pepper grinder
- Stick blender

1. Empty the peas into the large bowl.
2. Add all the other ingredients - the oil, garlic, lemon juice and pepper.
3. Use the tablespoon to mix the ingredients together.
4. Blend the ingredients.
5. Split the mixture between several bowls for sharing.
6. Dip the carrot batons or bread cubes into the blended mixture to try (no double dipping).



Sustainability

Compost inedible vegetables

Choose **fresh, local peas** when they're in season to support Scottish farmers and cut down on food miles. If you buy peas in pods, don't throw the pods away – they can be used to make a tasty **pea pod soup**, added to **vegetable stock**, or even **composted** to return nutrients to the soil. Cook only what you need, and if you have leftovers, peas can be easily stored in the fridge or frozen for another meal. You can also grow your own peas at home, even in small gardens or pots, which reduces packaging waste and gives you fresh peas on hand.





SUMMER



August



August often has some of the warmest days but the **end of summer is approaching** and we are into harvest time. We can still continue planting, but consider what you plant and how long it is going to take to reach maturity. There is a window between August and the end of the year for **fast growing crops**.

Discover Veggie STEM

Robotic weeding in vegetable crops uses cutting-edge **science and technology** to reduce the need for manual labour and chemical herbicides. These smart machines use **cameras, sensors, and artificial intelligence** to identify and target weeds with great precision, leaving the vegetable plants untouched. **Robotic weeders** are new machines being developed to help farmers **manage crops more efficiently, cut costs**, and support **more sustainable farming**. They reduce the need for **chemicals** and cause less **disturbance to the soil**.

Some models are even **solar-powered** and use **high-precision GPS** to navigate fields. As the **technology becomes cheaper**, these robots may become a **common sight** on farms growing **high-value vegetable crops**.



In the school garden

Sow



With the school holidays, you will only have the end of the month to plant. You could do some windowsill sowing and plan what you might want to get planted over the winter, garlic, for example.

Other jobs



Keep your plants well watered. Add some comfrey juice or worm juice from the bottom of a wormery (if you have one) to your water for some extra nutrients to help ensure the plants keep growing.

Harvest



radish	carrot
French beans	spinach
broad beans	main crop potatoes
peas	lettuce and other salads
onion	
garlic	

What's in season?

Many summer crops are at their peak, including **carrots, beetroot, courgettes, peas, and broad beans**. You'll also find plenty of **salad greens, spring onions, and potatoes**, along with the first of the **cabbages and kale** as autumn approaches.

Exploring Food - Onions

Onions are a reliable and easy-to-grow crop in Scotland, thriving in the **cooler climate** and well-drained soil. They can be grown from seeds or sets in spring and are usually ready to harvest by late summer when the tops begin to yellow and fall over. Once lifted, onions should be **dried thoroughly** in a warm, airy place before being stored in a cool, dry area – this helps them **last for many months** without spoiling.



Health and Wellbeing

Onions are not only versatile in cooking but also packed with health benefits. They contain **antioxidants** and compounds that support heart health, reduce inflammation, and may help strengthen the immune system. Whether raw, roasted, or sautéed, onions are a flavourful and healthy addition to any meal.





SUMMER



August



Caramelised onions

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp Scottish rapeseed oil
- 3 large Scottish red (or brown) onions, sliced
- 2 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1-2 tablespoons Balsamic Vinegar

Equipment

- Frying pan
- Chopping board
- Sharp knife
- Wooden spoon
- Tablespoon

1. Heat oil in pan.
2. Add onions and cook very slowly for 10 minutes over a low heat.
3. Once onions are soft add sugar and vinegar.
4. Cook for a further 5 - 10 minutes until caramelised.
5. Serve immediately.



Sustainability

Choose **locally grown onions** to support Scottish farmers and lower your carbon footprint. When preparing onions, use the outer layers in **stocks or soups** instead of throwing them away – they add great flavour. The green tops of spring onions or young onions can be chopped and used like herbs in salads, stir-fries, or garnishes. If you have leftover chopped onion, store it in an airtight container in the fridge or freezer to use later. Even the onion skins can be used to make a **rich vegetable broth**, or added to **compost** to return nutrients to the soil. Growing onions at home is another sustainable option – they're easy to grow and store well.





AUTUMN



September



Autumn has arrived, and the days are getting shorter, which is important to keep in mind when planning what to plant. Depending on your location in Scotland, there may still be time for **one last harvest** before winter sets in. If you're thinking ahead to next season, you can also allow some of your plants to go to seed so you can collect them – just make sure they're not hybrid varieties, as these may not grow true to type.

Discover Veggie STEM

Collecting vegetable seeds in Scotland involves both **traditional knowledge** and modern **science and technology**. Growers use techniques like **controlled pollination** and **careful plant selection** to ensure the seeds are healthy and true to type. In some cases, tools like **seed cleaners, moisture sensors, and genetic testing** are used to improve seed quality and storage. This helps produce strong, reliable crops for future planting.



Hybrid seeds are created by crossing two different plant varieties to combine their best traits, such as better yield, disease resistance, or uniform size. However, seeds saved from hybrid plants may not grow true to the original, which is why they're usually purchased fresh each season.

Scotland is renowned for its research and development in the field of potatoes. The potato variety Mayan Gold was developed in Invergowrie by the Scottish Crop research Institute, now part of The James Hutton Institute.

In the school garden

Sow

radish
spinach
lettuce



Other jobs

- Prepare soil, add compost
- Protect crops from frost
- Pot up strawberry runners



Harvest

French beans	radish
carrots	spinach
leeks	chard
onion	lettuce
peas	garlic
main crop potatoes	



What's in season?

As summer shifts into autumn, many late summer crops are still being harvested, while early autumn produce starts to appear. You'll find plenty of **British carrots, beetroot, leeks, broccoli, courgettes, and potatoes**, as well as **cabbages, kale, and other leafy greens**. Onions and garlic are also being lifted and stored for the colder months ahead.

Exploring food – Cabbage

Cabbage is a hardy and nutritious vegetable that grows well in Scotland's cool, damp climate. Cabbage also stores well, reducing food waste and providing a fresh, local option well into the colder months.



Health and Wellbeing

Cabbage is a source of **vitamins C and K, fibre, and antioxidants**, which support digestion, immunity, and overall wellbeing.





AUTUMN



September



Cabbage Stir fry

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons of Scottish rapeseed oil
- 2 teaspoons of garlic puree
- Half a Scottish cabbage cut into fine strips
- 2-3 tablespoons of Soy Sauce

Equipment

- Tablespoon
- Teaspoon
- Chopping board
- Sharp knife
- Frying pan
- Wooden spoon

1. Rinse the cabbage leaves and cut into fine strips.
2. Add the oil to the pan and heat.
3. Once warm add the garlic puree.
4. Cook for 1 minute stirring constantly.
5. Add the sliced cabbage.
6. Cook on a medium heat for 3 minutes.
7. Add Soy Sauce and serve immediately.



Sustainability

Using left overs

All parts of the **cabbage**, including the **outer leaves** and **core**, can be used – outer leaves are great in **soups** or **stir-fries** and the core can be **finely chopped** and added to **slaws** or **stocks**. **Leftover cooked cabbage** can be **stored in the fridge** and added to dishes like **bubble and squeak**, **soups**, or **wraps**.



AUTUMN

October



In the school garden

Sow

peas
broad beans
hardy winter lettuce
green manure



Other jobs

- Protect crops from frost
- Mulch bare soil
- Order strawberry plants
- Prepare soil and add compost



Harvest

Fresh beans	radish
carrots	spinach
leeks	chard
peas	lettuce
main crop potatoes	



What's in season?

October is a busy month for harvesting lots of **vegetables**. You'll find **carrots, parsnips, beetroot, and leeks** being pulled from the ground, ready to eat. It's also the season for **cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts**. These **autumn vegetables** are full of flavour and great for warming meals like **soups, stews, and roasts**.

Exploring food – Kale

The majority of **kale** grown in **Scotland** is used as a **livestock crop**, rather than for people to eat. It's often fed to **sheep** during the **winter months** because it's **frost tolerant**. Most of the kale sold for **human consumption** in Scotland actually comes from **Lincolnshire**. If you can't find **Scottish produce** (look for the **Saltire** ) , the next best option for keeping your **food miles** low is to choose products with the **Union Jack**. 



Discover Veggie STEM

Worms play a vital role in soil health, and science shows they are especially important when growing vegetables. As worms move through the soil, they create tiny tunnels that improve **aeration and drainage**, helping roots grow more easily. Their digestion breaks down organic matter into **nutrient-rich castings**, which naturally fertilise the soil. Worms also help mix the soil layers, spreading **microorganisms** that support plant health. A healthy worm population is a clear sign of **fertile, living soil** – perfect for growing strong, productive vegetables.



Health and Wellbeing

Kale is a source of **vitamins K, A, and C**, as well as **folate**, making it a healthy choice for our diets.

All our **British farmers** must follow the same **high production standards** and are regularly checked through **Quality Assurance Schemes and Government inspections** to make sure your food is **safe, fresh, and responsibly produced**.

Kale is part of the **brassica family**, which also includes **cabbages and turnips**, and its leaves can be **harvested more than once** from the same plant.



AUTUMN



October



Kale crisps

Ingredients

- 1 good handful of Scottish kale
- 1 tablespoon Scottish rapeseed oil

Equipment

- Baking tray
- Sharp knife
- Chopping board

1. Preheat an oven to 175°C.
2. Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper.
3. Cut the kale into bite-sized pieces.
4. Remove the larger, thicker pieces of stem as they will not cook in the short time the crisps are in the oven.
5. Bake for 3-5 minutes until the edges brown but are not burnt. (Halfway through cooking take the tray out and turn the kale over to ensure the crisps are crispy but do not burn.)
6. Serve immediately – kale crisps do not store.



Sustainability

Different methods of preparing

Try using the **whole kale leaf**, including the **stems**! The leafy part is great for salads, smoothies, or stir-fries, and the tougher stems can be chopped up and cooked into **soups, stews**, or even **roasted** for a crunchy crisp snack. If your kale is starting to wilt, don't throw it out – just cook it. If you have too much, you can **freeze** it to use later.



AUTUMN

November



Any seeds you plant in the soil now need to be able to withstand the winter months. The goal of **winter planting** is to give crops a head start for the following year. However, heavy winter rain can cause seeds to **rot** or be **eaten by pests**, which can reduce their chances of success. To improve your chances of a good crop, it's a smart idea to plant a mix of **winter-hardy seeds** and **spring-sown seeds**, giving you a backup if winter conditions are harsh.

Discover Veggie STEM

Some vegetables survive frost thanks to natural **biological adaptations**. They produce **sugars and proteins** that act like antifreeze, protecting their cells from freezing. Science shows that hardy crops like kale and swede can even become **sweeter** after a frost, as the plant converts starches into sugars to cope with the cold.



In the school garden

Sow

garlic
broad beans
strawberry runners



Other jobs

- Dig soil and, if conditions allow, plant fruit plants
- Cut autumn raspberry canes to ground level
- Collect leaves to make leaf compost



Harvest

lettuce (if protected)
leeks
carrots
spinach



Health and Wellbeing

Beetroot contains **fibre, vitamins A and C**, and **iron**, making it ideal for boosting energy and supporting heart health. Beetroot can be eaten roasted, boiled, raw or pickled.

What's in season?

Exploring food – Beetroot

Beetroot is a popular vegetable to grow in Scotland because it thrives in the cool climate and can be harvested from late summer into autumn. It's a great choice for sustainable gardening since beetroot needs relatively little water and can be grown without heavy use of pesticides or fertilizers when cared for properly. Growing beetroot locally also helps reduce food miles and packaging waste.





AUTUMN



November



Beetroot Chutney

Ingredients

- 500g raw Scottish beetroot, peeled and chopped into chunky pieces
- 1 large cooking apple (a Bramley apple works well), peeled, cored, and chopped
- 2 Scottish red onions, finely chopped
- 250ml red wine vinegar
- 250g British sugar (either caster or light brown)

Equipment

- Chopping board
- Knife
- Jug
- Large saucepan
- Wooden spoon
- Jars (if storing the chutney)

Sterilising the jars:

You can eat the chutney as soon as it is made. However if you want to safely store your chutney, it's important to sterilise your jars first:

- Preheat your oven to 140°C (120°C fan) or Gas Mark 1.
- Wash the jars in hot soapy water, rinse them, and place them (still wet) on an oven tray.
- Put the tray in the oven for 15 minutes—this will sterilise and dry the jars. You can leave them in the oven while you make the chutney.
- Alternatively, use a dishwasher cycle of at least 60°C to sterilise, but don't dry the jars with a towel – let them air dry instead.

1. Peel and chop the beetroot into chunky pieces.
2. Finely chop the red onions.
3. Peel, core, and chop the apple into slightly smaller chunks than the beetroot.
4. Place all ingredients into a large pan and bring to the boil.
5. Reduce the heat and simmer until the beetroot is tender.
6. Once softened, bring it back to a boil and stir regularly. Let it cook down until the mixture becomes thick and sticky
7. Spoon the hot chutney into your warm sterilised jars, seal and let cool.
8. Enjoy your homemade beetroot chutney with cheese, cold meats, or in sandwiches. Don't forget you can also roast or boil beetroot, you don't have to pickle it!



Sustainability

Roots and leaves

Enjoying beetroot sustainably means using the whole vegetable and finding creative ways to reduce waste. When preparing beetroot, you can cook and eat both the **roots** and the **greens** – the leaves are tasty in salads or lightly sautéed like spinach. Instead of throwing away beetroot skins, save them to add flavour to homemade vegetable stocks or compost them to enrich your garden soil. If you have leftover cooked beetroot, store it in the fridge or freeze it for later use.



❄️ WINTER ❄️



December



December can be a **chilly month** in Scotland and only the **toughest vegetables**, such as **kale**, can **survive outdoors**. Some vegetables, like **carrots**, can stay in the **ground during winter** but should be **covered** to stop them from becoming **soft and mushy**. You can still **grow certain plants indoors** and **hardy winter vegetables** can continue to be **harvested** throughout the season.

Discover Veggie STEM

Reducing soil-borne diseases in vegetable growing is an important part of producing healthy, reliable crops. These diseases are caused by harmful microbes – like fungi, bacteria, or nematodes – that live in the soil and can attack vegetable roots.

One key method is **soil testing**, which helps identify if disease-causing organisms are present. Farmers also use **crop rotation** which involves rotating where vegetables are planted on the farm and can prevent diseases from building up in the soil.

Tools like **soil moisture sensors** and **digital mapping** help farmers monitor the conditions that affect disease risk. Some growers use **biological controls**, introducing natural predators or beneficial microbes into the soil to fight off harmful ones. Others use **disease-resistant vegetable varieties** developed through plant science. During **mild, wet winters**, some **plant diseases** become more common because they are spread by **fungi, insects** and other **pests**. When winters are mild and not very cold, frost doesn't kill off **pests and diseases**. As a result, more of them survive and show up in greater numbers in the spring when crops begin to grow.

In the school garden

Sow

mustard
cress
(indoors)



Harvest

leeks
chard



Other jobs

- Dig soil if conditions allow
- Plant fruit
- Cut autumn raspberry canes to ground level
- Collect leaves to make leaf compost



Health and Wellbeing

Swedes are a source of **fibre, vitamin C**, and important minerals like **potassium**, which support digestion, immunity, and heart function.

What's in season?

December is all about **root vegetables** like **carrots**, **parsnips** and **swedes** which are in season and perfect for warming soups and stews. **Brassicas** such as **kale**, **Brussels sprouts**, and **cabbage** are at their best, thriving in the colder weather and packed with vitamins. **Leeks** are still being harvested, adding flavour and nutrition to winter dishes.

Exploring food - Swede

Swede (**called neeps in Scotland**) are sturdy root vegetables. Swedes also store really well through the winter months, helping to reduce food waste and provide fresh, local produce even when other vegetables are out of season.



Vegetable Soup

Ingredients

- 1 medium Scottish potato
- 1 Scottish onion
- 1 Scottish carrot
- 500 mls water
- 1 stock cube (vegetable or ham)
- 10ml spoon Scottish rapeseed oil
- Pinch salt/pepper
- Small bunch of parsley

Optional (Add any of these vegetables depending on what you have or like.)

- Piece of Scottish turnip
- 1 parsnip
- 1 stick celery
- 50g peas (fresh or frozen)

Equipment

- Chopping board
- Sharp knife
- Paper towel/kitchen towel (to collect the peelings from the vegetables)
- Measuring spoon – 10ml
- Measuring jug
- Medium sized pan
- Wooden spoon
- Optional Hand blender/liquidiser

1. Peel the potato and carrot. Remove the outer layer from the onion.
2. Cut vegetables into small cubes, to fit on a teaspoon, so it is easy to eat.
3. If using additional vegetables – prepare them as required.
4. Heat oil in pan, then add vegetables. Cook for 3 minutes. Stirring all the time.
5. Add water and stock cube.
6. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes, or until the vegetables are soft.
7. Add the salt and pepper.
8. Chop parsley finely and sprinkle on the top.



Sustainability

Grow your own

When cooking swede, try to use the whole vegetable – **peel** and chop the **flesh** for **roasting**, **mashing**, or adding to **soups and stews**. Don't throw away the **peelings**; they can be added to your green waste bin or home **compost** bin and be returned to the soil. If you have **leftover swede**, store it in the **fridge** or **freeze** cooked portions to use later. You can also **grow your own swede** at home, which reduces **packaging waste** and **food miles**. You can just trim the top off the swede and cook it in the microwave on high for about 15mins, or until soft and then scoop it out of the outside skin. It might whistle so is sometimes called a singing neep!

