



Onions



Whether you like them caramelized or crisped up in the oven, onions make a great pizza topping and a perfect match for nearly every other topping!





Onions

Onions are usually grown from sets. Onion sets are small, immature onion bulbs which are in their second year of the onion's life cycle. This is the easiest and fastest way to grow them, and will produce an earlier crop. Plants grown from sets are also less likely to be affected by disease. However, they are more prone to bolting (when a flower is produced instead of a bulb).

Choose your onion sets

Onions are a versatile crop, coming in a range of colours for different uses in the kitchen. All onion varieties are easy to grow and they store well too, so you can enjoy home-grown onions all year round.

Sowing time

Dig the ground well in early winter incorporating a generous quantity of manure or compost.

Firm the surface before planting and rake in a general fertiliser such as Bonemeal.

Plant onion sets out between March – mid May.

Planting your onion sets

All onions require good soil and free drainage to avoid water logging.

Plant them 10-15cm apart, allowing 30cm between rows. Plant them just below the soil surface, with just the tips showing, in moisture-retentive, fertile soil, ideally with plenty of well-rotted organic matter such as garden compost.

Crop Care

Protect from birds with black thread or netting.

In spring, apply a nitrogen-rich fertiliser to autumn-planted bulbs to give them a boost. Water well during dry spells and remove any flower heads that appear, as these divert the plant's energy from bulb development, to seed production.

Onions are shallow rooting, so hand weed instead of hoeing between the rows to keep weeds down.

Mulching is useful for cutting down the need for water and suppressing weeds.

Stop watering when the onions have swollen and pull back the mulch to expose the surface to the sun.

Harvesting your onions

Harvest onions as soon as they're big enough to use. The leaves will droop over and turn brown when they've stopped growing. Gently loosen the soil with a fork and lift the onions out of the soil, and leave them to dry on a drying rack or similar, before storing.

Top tip for storing onions

Onions that you want to store must be dried and this can take 7-21 days depending on the size of the onion and the air temperature.

Spread the onions out on newspaper or racks to dry out. They're ready when their outer skins rustle when you touch them. Hang or string them in nets in a cool, dark, dry place and they should last for months.