

Grow & eat

Jamie Oliver's KITCHEN GARDEN

Part 4 Year-round results

With Jamie's foolproof sowing and harvesting plan you'll never run out of fruit and veg, says **Kevin Smith**. Photos by Sarah Cuttle

It's a July summer day and Jamie Oliver's kitchen garden is bursting at the seams with tasty fruit and vegetables. But what would Jamie's raised veg beds look like on a frosty January day? Would there be as much to pick and cook in winter? How does he ensure that he gets a year-round supply?

"Ah, that's the Holy Grail of being a gardener," Jamie laughs. "I guess in restaurant terms it's about staggering your service. For instance, I've just used up my first lot of beetroots but I've already got some new seedlings on the go. It's

like this through the year and I'm continually doing bits and pieces so I can stretch the seasons as much as possible."

It sounds so easy but in reality it's not and Jamie has spent a long time dealing with setbacks in the pursuit of perfecting the formula for success. "I think even good gardeners struggle, to be honest – don't they?" However, repeat sowing is, of course, one of Jamie's fail-safe methods. It means that his vegetable supply is no less prolific in the winter than it is in the summer, with a regular



The best winter veg coleslaw

"Coleslaw is something most of us have grown up eating, yet a lot of the time it is made so badly. With this in mind, I want to bring it back with a vengeance. I've used yoghurt instead of mayonnaise to bind the vegetables because it not only tastes better, in my opinion, but it's also healthier. If you're struggling to find radishes or fennel, don't worry. Just do what you can, but remember that the more interesting crunchy vegetables you can get shredded into this baby, the better!"

"PS, if you haven't got round to buying yourself a food processor yet, and you're serious about cooking, do go and buy one. It won't be a waste of money – unlike most kitchen gadgets, you'll use it all the time, especially for recipes like this one."

SERVES 6

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 carrots, different colours if you can find them, peeled | 1 shallot, peeled |
| 1 bulb of fennel, trimmed | 1 lemon |
| At least 2 of the following: | Extra-virgin olive oil |
| 3-4 radishes; 1 light-coloured beetroot, peeled; 1 turnip, peeled; ½ a small celeriac, peeled | A handful of fresh soft herb leaves, chopped (use mint, fennel, dill, parsley and chervil) |
| 400g red and white cabbage, outer leaves removed | 250ml yoghurt |
| ½ a red onion | 2 tbsp mustard |
| | Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper |

- Shred the carrots, fennel and your choice of radishes, beetroot, turnip or celeriac on a mandoline or use the julienne slicer in your food processor. Alternatively, simply use a potato or speed-peeler.
- Put the veg into a mixing bowl. Slice the cabbage, onion and shallot as finely as you can and add to the bowl.
- In a separate bowl, mix half the lemon juice, a glug of olive oil, the chopped herbs, yoghurt and mustard. Pour this dressing over the veg and mix well to coat everything. Season to taste with salt and pepper and the rest of the lemon juice if you like.
- This coleslaw is really delicious served with thinly sliced leftover roast meat, such as lamb, pork or rare roast beef, that has been drizzled with extra-virgin olive oil.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Jamie hangs herbs in the kitchen to save too many chilly outings; the lure of sweet, young carrots proves too hard to resist; clever planning means there is always something to harvest



supply of brassicas, root vegetables and salads on tap. All that changes is how dirty his hands get. Most of his winter crops are planted earlier in the year, so maintenance of his vegetable crops is put on the back burner during the colder months. Not that winter means cold to Jamie. "Did you know that British winter isn't particularly British at all?" Seeing my puzzled look, he explains: "To me it's Asian. All the mustard leaves, the mooli and the radishes I love – they all originate in Asia."

Even though Jamie isn't actively planting during the winter months, his veg crops still keep him busy as they need to be stored and preserved. "I store Jerusalem artichokes and spuds," he says. If you equate self-sufficiency success with what you're able to put on the table each week, Jamie has it in spades. "I get enough squash in October to last me until February. It's because they have those thick skins that they store so well."

Of course, eating a range of fresh food is one of the best benefits of growing your own. Why, in January, asks Jamie do people eat tomatoes picked unripe and flown in from Spain when they could have an array of fresh and tasty winter veg from right outside their back doors?

"I think eating seasonally is very natural. You can yadda on about it in any way you like, but the truth is when you grow your own stuff and eat it straight away, it tastes just amazingly good. It really puts into perspective the out-of-season stuff that we buy as a matter of course."

Jamie clearly cares passionately about this, but we would expect no less from a chef who is famous for insisting on the freshest ingredients. "Growing, picking and then cooking straight away is so important," he continues. "If you pick something and cook it within an hour it actually tastes different. Its nutritional content is greater, too. A carrot that you pick and eat within two hours has the nutritional equivalent of eating two shop-bought ones."

Jamie says that growing his own produce has made him try different, seasonal alternatives to his tried and tested recipes, and encouraged him to bend his cooking rules and accept that not all ingredients are available on demand throughout the year. He also reckons restaurateurs had better watch out because their customers are becoming much more veg-savvy.

"Growing your own means you set your standards higher. When you go to a restaurant and it's £17.50 for a roasted turbot with new potatoes, and you think 'My new potatoes are better than that' and 'Why don't these fall apart like mine?' then restaurants are in trouble."

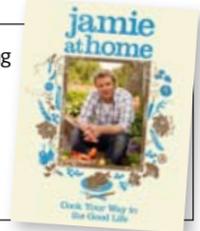
Jamie's now three years into his self-sufficiency drive so what's his ambition for his vegetable garden in 2008? "I'm hoping these next couple of months are going to be my chance to get on top of it all," he laughs. "It's all about planning: what to plant, when to harvest and when to store."

"If I can get this cracked, then I'll be sorted for the year." You and the rest of us, Jamie!

Jamie's veg-growing tips

- 1 Start sowing early. This allows plants a good start and will give early crops to spread your yield.
- 2 Don't be put off by setbacks. If birds pull up newly planted onion and shallot sets, just stick them back in the ground.
- 3 Protect your veg. Fold the leaves of cauliflowers over their developing heads to shield them from hot summer sun as well as damaging frosts in winter.
- 4 Keep up the care. Stay on top of earthing up potatoes and leeks. Little and often is the key.
- 5 Be inventive. Slip a tile under squashes and pumpkins to keep their bases dry and prevent rot.

Gardeners' World offer Jamie at Home, a book of simple growing tips and great recipes, can be ordered for £22.50 with free p&p (RRP £25). Call 0870 350 6091, visit www.efcbooks.co.uk, or send a cheque, payable to BBC Worldwide, to BBC Bookshop, PO Box 200, Falmouth TR11 4WJ. Offer closes 31 March.



► Turn over for Jamie's vegetable year planner of what to do when

RECIPE TEXT: COPYRIGHT © JAMIE OLIVER, 2007. RECIPE PHOTOGRAPHS: COPYRIGHT © DAVID LOFTUS, 2007.

Jamie's YEAR PLANNER

Ensure a year of bountiful vegetable crops by following Jamie's sowing and picking guide

JANUARY

MY FAVOURITE Brussels sprouts – they're delicious so long as you don't overcook them. My preferred varieties are 'Evesham Special', 'Maximus', 'Red Bull' and 'Rubine'.
Also picking Parsnip, leek and kale
I'm sowing Tomatoes – big beefy ones like 'Marmande'

FEBRUARY

MY FAVOURITE Sprouting broccoli – the first little babies of the year are amazing. For early crops I go for 'Rudolph' and 'Early Purple'.
Also picking Kale, cabbage, winter spinach

I'm sowing Broad beans – 'Aquadulce Claudia', 'Grando Violetto', 'Red Epicure', 'Witkiem Manita' (from now to April)
Chillies – 'Dorset Naga', 'Habanero', 'Jalapeño' (now to March)
Parsnips – 'White Gem', 'Tender and True' (this month and next)
Shallot sets – 'Longor', 'Red Sun'
Summer cabbage – 'Hispi', 'Winnigstadt'
Sweet peppers – 'Atris', 'Corno di Toro Rosso', 'Bell Boy', 'Californian Wonder'
Tomatoes – mid-sized varieties, such as 'MoneyMaker'



MARCH

MY FAVOURITE Kale – it thrives at this time of year. I grow 'Dwarf Green Curled', 'Nero di Toscana', 'Redbor' and 'Red Russian'.
Also picking Rocket, sprouting broccoli, chard
I'm sowing Beets – 'Bull's Blood', 'Burpees Golden', 'Chioggia', 'Pablo' (from now to July)
Broad beans – (see February)
Brussels – 'Evesham Special', 'Maximus', 'Red Bull', 'Rubine'
Chillies – (see February)
Leeks – 'Autumn Mammoth', 'Giant Winter', 'Musselburgh', 'St Victor'
Onions – 'Boretтана', 'Sturon'
Parsnips – (see February)
Peas – 'Carouby de Maussane', 'Ezeta's Krombek Blauswschok', 'Kelvedon Wonder' (also April)
Rocket – 'Sky Rocket', wild rocket, (April to October)
Salads – 'Avon Defiance', 'Lollo Bionda', 'Kendo', 'Bijou', 'Saladini', 'Valdai', (also from April to August).
Tomatoes – cherry varieties such as 'Gardeners' Delight'
Turnip – 'Golden Ball', 'Purple Top Milan', 'Oasis' (also in April)



“Kale, such as cavolo nero, thrives in spring”

January 2008

APRIL

MY FAVOURITE Asparagus – one of the first signs that spring is here. I love 'Connovers Colossal', 'Crimson Pacific', 'Jersey Knight' and 'Scaber Montana' (wild asparagus).
Also picking Spring cabbage, rhubarb, kale
I'm sowing Basil
Beets – (see March)
Broad beans – (see February)
Cabbage – 'Cantassa', 'Red Flare'
Calabrese – 'Pacifica', 'Tiara'
Carrots – 'Amsterdam Forcing', 'Autumn King', 'Nantes', (until June)
Cauliflower – 'Graffiti', 'Snowball', 'Veronica'
Courgettes – 'Costa Romanesque', 'Nero di Milano', 'Rondo di Nizza', 'Soleil' (also in May and June)
Peas – (see March)
Potatoes – 'Jersey Royal' (also known as 'International Kidney'), 'Nicola', 'King Edward'
Red onions – 'Long Red Florence', 'Red Baron', 'Tropea Rossa'
Rocket (see March)
Salads (see March)
Turnip (see March)
Winter cabbage – 'January King', 'Holland Winter White' (also in May)

MAY

MY FAVOURITE Cabbage – planted early, this is delicious now. I love 'Golden Acre' and 'Pyramid'.
Also picking Broad beans
I'm sowing Beans – 'Hildora', 'Purple Queen', 'Painted Lady', 'Scarlet Emperor', 'Borlotto Lingua di Fuoco' (also June)
Beets (see March)
Carrots (see April)
Courgettes (see April)
Sprouting broccoli – 'Rudolph', 'Early Purple'
Squash – 'Sunburst', 'Trombolino', 'Atlantic Giant', 'Crown Prince'
Winter cabbage (see April)
Winter kale – Cavolo nero



JUNE

MY FAVOURITE Potatoes – 'Accent', 'Epicure', 'Jersey Royal' and 'Red Duke of York' are my first choice.
Also picking Beets, beans, salads
I'm sowing Beans (see May)
Beets (see March)
Carrots (see April)
Courgettes (see April)
Salads (see March)
Winter squash – 'Chieftain', 'Crown Prince', 'Marina di Chioggia', 'Mucade de Provence', 'Rolet', 'Turk's Turban'

JULY

MY FAVOURITE Peas and beans – I'm spoilt for choice at this time of year. 'Kelvedon Wonder' is just the pea for an Essex boy!
Also picking Turnips, carrots
I'm sowing Beets (see March)
Salads (see March)
Spring cabbage – 'Golden Acre', 'Pyramid'
Turnip (see March)

AUGUST

MY FAVOURITE Chillies – 'Dorset Naga', 'Habanero' and 'Jalapeño' have to be my fiery favourites.
Also picking Tomatoes, courgettes, shallots, sweetcorn
I'm sowing Salads (see March)
Turnip (see March)

SEPTEMBER

MY FAVOURITE Carrots – versatile and tasty and in all different colours. For classic orange, go for 'Nantes', but if you're looking for different colours opt for 'Rainbow'.
Also picking Calabrese, summer cabbage, onions
I'm sowing Winter spinach

OCTOBER

MY FAVOURITE Squash and pumpkins – they need lots of space but what terrific colours and flavour! 'Atlantic Giant' is great for growing a whopper and 'Crown Prince' is worth growing for its pale blue skin.
Also picking Cauliflower
I'm planting Garlic – 'Elephant'



NOVEMBER

MY FAVOURITE Parsnip – great for winter stews and roasting. 'White Gem' and 'Tender and True' are always winners for me.
Also picking Leeks, winter cabbage
I'm planting Not a great deal – there's just a few broad beans to overwinter

DECEMBER

MY FAVOURITE Jerusalem artichoke – not to everyone's taste but great for the cold months.
Also picking Brussels sprouts
I'm planting Nothing. Instead, I'm pouring over the seed catalogues for next year

What's coming up? Don't miss the final part of this series next month, when Jamie reveals how he keeps his chickens

Where to buy your veg seeds & plants

■ **Mr. Fothergill's**
0845 130 1304, www.organiccatalog.com
0845 166 2511, www.fothergills.co.uk

■ **Peppers by Post**
01308 897 766, www.peppersbypost.biz

■ **Seeds of Italy**
020 8427 5020, www.seedsofitaly.com

821, www.thompson-morgan.co.uk

■ **The Garlic Farm**
01983 865 378, www.thegarlicfarm.co.uk

■ **Seeds-by-Size**
01442 251 458, www.seeds-by-size.co.uk

■ **Tamar Organics**
01579 371 087, www.tamarorganics.co.uk

■ **Tuckers Seeds**
01364 652 233, www.tuckers-seeds.co.uk

■ **Unwins Direct**
01480 443 395, www.unwinsdirect.co.uk