



“Familiar things happen and mankind does not bother with them. It requires a very unusual mind to understand the analysis of the obvious”

Science and the Modern World, Alfred North Whitehead

Welcome to vegetableseeds.net.au

July 2014 Newsletter

Welcome to www.vegetableseeds.net.au. This newsletter is about the relevance to us home gardeners of climatic regions of which many of us underestimate the importance.

This is followed by photos and examples of the vegetables in our winter vegetable garden at our Garden Centre in Tasmania’s cool climate. You can see our seed sowing guide, courtesy Steve Solomon, on the above web site - it is accurate for all cool growing regions in Australia. To get guaranteed results almost every time it is best to follow these recommended sowing dates because they are based on experience. We specialise in cool climate varieties because we are in a cool climate region.

Our seeds may well work in other climatic regions, I don’t know, I would have had to have studied horticulture in many different countries and worked in many regions to have the confidence to advise you, only by sowing some of our varieties in your own climatic region at the dates you think may be correct will you find out.

Climatic Map



This is a colour coded map of the climatic regions of Australia.

There are many of these for home gardeners, most of us just glance at them because they are so familiar they are not really worth looking at being too general, but they are valuable because they give an overview of our climatic regions.

In this one Green denotes cool temperate, where all our seeds are trialled for. Pink is Mediterranean, orange semi-arid Northern region, purple semi-arid southern region, blue humid sub-tropical, light blue humid sub-tropical, white sub-tropical and red tropical.

Climatic Planting Guide



This is a planting guide from a gardening magazine, we've all seen these. This one has suggested sowing dates of vegetables for the winter months in coastal tropical, coastal sub-tropical, mild winter, and cool winter climates.

Together with the map you can see what you can sow at the right time in your region, assuming that the guide is based on actual growing experience. This one is quite accurate in my opinion.

For best results keep a diary of when and what you sow and harvest every year, note what does and doesn't work in your garden because local knowledge of your region is as good as it gets.

Lines of latitude and climate how they can help vegetable gardeners.

These imaginary parallel lines around the globe mark the climate and day length in your region. Look at the latitudes I have listed below, the climatic map of Australia, and the planting guide, now the relevance of different sowing dates for vegetables in each climatic region makes sense.

Climate is complicated as we know, analysing latitudes from a map is not a precise tool for the veggie gardener because weather patterns, altitude, geographical features, periods of frost, large bodies of water, and many other factors ultimately determine a regions climate but it is a good start.

A few places with their latitudes and climates.

Look at these regions to see what's happening in in these climates today one thing I found was The Sahara forest project which is really exciting.

The following is not a scientific paper about climate it is light weight and to be enjoyed by home gardeners it is based on the Koppen climate classification system which uses the occurrence of native vegetation as a guide, so please forgive any technical errors any scientists amongst you may spot.

Southern Hemisphere

Australia

42 degrees Launceston, Hobart (maritime cool temperate)

35 degrees Sydney (temperate), Albany, Adelaide (Mediterranean)

30 degrees Canberra (continental hot summer cold winter), Coffs Harbour (humid sub-tropical), Perth (Mediterranean)

25 degrees Bundaberg (Mediterranean), Carnarvon (semi-arid) Uluru (hot desert)

20 degrees Townsville (tropical dry) Tennant creek (desert wet/dry) Karratha (hot semi-arid)

14.5 degrees Katherine (tropical savannah)

Brazil

30 degrees The Highlands (temperate humid)

0 degrees The Equator Amazon basin (Tropical wet).

Northern Hemisphere

Japan

35 degrees Osaka and Tokyo on Honshu Island (sub-tropical but further North Islands are cool temperate which is why some of the best vegetable seed companies in the World are in Japan).

The Americas

40 to 50 degrees Oregon and Idaho (Cool climate).

40 degrees California a complicated climatic region to study (Cascade mountains sub-arctic, N coast and central valley Mediterranean, inland continental, death valley semi-arid)

30 degrees Texas (generally arid but also has many distinctly different regional climates). North Mexico on the tropic of cancer (hot and dry but also has three more complicated climatic influences determining climate in its other regions)

10 degrees Costa Rica (tropical), Trinidad (maritime tropical)



Europe

60 degrees Russia (generally continental, but very diverse climatic regions)

56 degrees Scotland (cool temperate)

53 degrees Ireland (cool temperate)

51.5 degrees England and Wales (cool temperate)

40 degrees Albania, Greece, Spain and Portugal (cool temperate)

41 degrees Italy, Rome (Mediterranean)



Africa

28 degrees Algeria (Mediterranean)

20 degrees North Sudan (arid) and the Sahara (sub-tropical hot desert)

0 degrees The Equator Congo (Tropical wet)

Some commercial vegetable growing regions in Australia and their latitudes.

Lockyer valley Qld 28 degrees cool temperate to sub-tropical. Bowen Qld 20 degrees sub-tropical. Riverina NSW 35 degrees Mediterranean. Werribee Victoria 38 degrees cool temperate. Riverland South Australia 34 degrees Mediterranean. Tasmania 42 degrees cool temperate.

What's going on in our cool climate winter garden in Tasmania 42 degrees south July 2014?

The following photos and notes were taken on the first of July 2014. The autumn and early winter is very mild this year pests like the cabbage moth caterpillars are still evident. The important factor which limits vegetative growth in autumn in a cool climate is not warmth it is decreasing day length.



Asparagus (possible origin Europe, N.Africa, W.Asia) the 1m by 1m bed has plenty of cow manure, sheep manure, COF (complete organic fertiliser), and seaweed.

The plants love as much seaweed and compost as possible and water throughout the seasons.

These plants grown from seed are now three years old and producing several spears, we cut the asparagus foliage back when it was starting to turn yellow and no longer capable of photosynthesis, it will regrow in Spring.



Broad bean (Possible origin N Africa, S Asia) Our rare purple flowered variety which we are growing for seed this year in isolation.

The plants are about 35cm tall, some are trying to flower but won't come to anything without insect pollination these flowers will just shrivel up on the plant.

They will flower properly in mid-October to coincide with bee activity for pollination to produce rich flavoured dark green beans in November. We sowed these in March. In very cold areas delay sowing this variety until late winter as it does not handle severe cold conditions well.



Broccoli (Possible origin N Mediterranean) our seeds were sown in late February and the heads are just starting to form now.

They have been fed with chicken manure and COF twice from seedling stage.



Brussels sprouts (possible origin Belgium) our seeds are of a mid to late season variety and were sown in mid-January, they are all producing sprouts now. The plants need the long days of summer to grow the stems and leaves and the sprouts form in the colder weather of July and August which also sweetens the taste of the sprouts. We fed these with COF three times.

If sown too late in autumn they will not grow tall stems or many leaves and so not produce sprouts. If sown in spring the stems and leaves will grow but the sprouts will open, be bitter and get attacked by white flies and cabbage moths making the sprouts inedible.



Cabbage (possible origin Europe) our sweet green cabbage was sown in February, and is just starting to have enough leaves to start forming small heads. These have been fed with COF twice from seedling stage and chicken manure. The plants will grow more leaves and bigger compact heads quickly from now on. They will be ready to harvest about August.



Chinese cabbage variety (Origin China).

An old and rare variety we grew from seed, a wonderful soft leaved, not tough and hairy, succulent sweet flavoured heading type which seems best sown late February here, as it did not bolt to seed.

Feed with COF from seedling stage twice and needs copious amounts of slug pellets, slugs devour Chinese cabbages.



Chinese greens (origin Asia)

Green elk mustard and Mibuna sown in late summer were slow to get going but are now ready for their first cut, they will produce about three more times. We liquid feed thee with fish emulsion twice a month, and COF twice.



We used lots of slug pellets. You can use copper tape around raised beds too, this is very effective.



Fennel (possible origin Mediterranean) sown from our seeds in late January, note it is just bulbing now.

Good selections don't go to seed, especially if sown at the correct time. It will continue to form a larger bulb and ready for harvest end July/August.

We fed this with COF four times since the seedling stage, the top growth is now very strong and the bulbs growing stronger every day.



Garlic and onions (possible origin Asia) from our seeds.

The beautiful brown and sweet red onion seeds were direct sown in April.

They germinated in two weeks and they are nearly ready for transplanting now.

The flowering of daffodils occurs at about the same time as transplanting every year, we don't fertilise the onions until they are transplanted with COF.



The garlic has all started to grow, this was planted in March at twice the depth of the clove, it will be harvested in late January.



Green manures blue lupins (origin Europe) our seeds were sown in March, the top growth and root can be cut down or dug in from end August to mid-September.



Kale (origin Europe) variety 'Moretons line', our seed sown in late January and now about 1.5m tall, the flavour of the leaves is sweetening now, but is still a bit strong in flavour.

We fed this with COF twice it does not need much plant food.



Lettuce (origin Europe) Our iceberg lettuces sown in late February and are ready now to eat, cold wet conditions could lead to rots if we leave them too long before harvest.

We fed these with COF twice and liquid fish emulsion once a month.



Radish (possible origin S.E Asia) variety 'cheriette' our seeds sown in mid-march, were slow to get established and probably sown a bit late, but they are ready now.

Sowing would have been better in late February. We fed these with COF twice.



Sprouting purple broccoli (possible origin N. Europe). Our selection sown in mid-January, will not head up until late August.

The plants are hardy and just starting to accelerate in their growth as days begin to lengthen very slowly.

We fed these with cow manure, and COF twice.



Turnip 'white lady' (Origin Japan) from our seeds, a fantastic flavoured small sweet round white turnip, makes fantastic veggie chips.

Sown from our seeds in mid-March under a cloche, and proves that a slightly warmer environment will extend the growing season with this particular crop.

Fed with COF twice. Usually sown late January to March and again late August to October, can go to seed in very warm weather.

Cool climate sowing dates based on actual growing experience.

In late July you can start sowing cabbages, broccoli and cauliflower in punnets with bottom heat of about 17 degrees centigrade for transplanting in late August.

Delay sowing these in the open ground until mid-September because the soil is a bit too cold for fast germination in winter, unless you live in a warmer microclimate or use a hothouse or cloches.

Some folk start tomato, capsicum and chilli plants from seed in small pots on heated mats set at 25 to 28 degrees Celsius late July.

Sow broad beans mid-August when you can also sow radishes, lettuces, Chinese greens, Japanese turnips and English spinach.

Happy gardening wherever you may be.



Remember:

FREE POSTAGE

on all our seeds, check our Catalogue