

Long live the spring onion!

Spring onions are those eaten from April-May. A true king of fresh vegetables harvested at the end of winter. No need to wait until the bulb is really large, you can also nibble on the green leaves. You know the type: they are sold fresh in bunches of 6 or 7. A delicious accompaniment to salads from the first nice days, they are raw in a green salad or potato salad, or even on their own with just buttered toast. Cooked, they can be added to a tender and tasty vegetable mix: petits pois, baby carrots, turnips... Of the best known spring onions, the "Paris white onion" is one type with a flat bulb and is weather resistant.

Spring onions are planted from the second half of August to mid-September and transplanted with 3 or 4 leaves in October. The transplantation has to be made in intervals of 10 cm and in rows about 25 cm apart from each other, in light soil that has not recently been fertilized. Please also rotate crops: they are part of the Amaryllis family like garlic, shallots and leeks, which should not be in the same place in the garden within the same 3 years.

You haven't planted any? Don't cry over your onions, it's a reparable oversight: try planting them at the end of December in a greenhouse or you can buy seedlings in the market at the end of February-March in bunches of 50. Alternatively, at this same time, plant small bulbs of white onion sold by weight or in sachets and don't hesitate to pick them before they're fully grown and eat them straightaway.

I also plant "Red Florence onions" in August and grow them in the same way: their bulb is elongated, they are soft and tasty! Take care: like with white onions they don't last long. Harvested at the start of July, the green stems are already dry and the bulbs must be eaten by October for those of you who wouldn't have already savoured them.

The onion grows very slowly during the initial period after planting, and you must get rid of weeds from the very start as they will seriously compete. Hoe regularly.

In cold areas or simply if you decide to plant them between February and April, thin them out quickly in 10cm intervals in a row, without transplanting them, and you will harvest them from July to September.

Other varieties:

- Fast growing Vaugirard onion
- Fast growing Queen onion
- Pale red Niort onion for coloured slices on salads
- Very fast growing Barletta onion planted in spring for small onions to turn into vinegar, with or without pickles.

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