



## ROTATION - otherwise known as POTS, ROOTS, LEGS AND BRAS

Families of vegetables share the same strengths and weaknesses and are prone to the same particular pests and diseases. These may live dormant in the soil for years just waiting for the crop they want to attack to appear.

Rotation was recognized as far back as Ancient Greece as sound practice. It curbs the build-up of pests and diseases in the soil by leaving a gap of some years before returning crops to the same ground. The concept is neat and logical. The most important groups to rotate are potatoes, legumes, roots, brassicas, and onions.

### Traditional Rotation

#### YEAR ONE

##### Potatoes

The soil is manured as potatoes like a rich soil on the acid side. Potatoes are the traditional clearing crop on a weedy site. They put out lots of leaves which shade out weeds and they usually need quite a lot of digging, so soil-borne pests are exposed to the birds.

#### YEAR TWO

##### Roots – the carrot family

Roots prefer light soil that has been fertilized the year before and which is on the alkaline side. Add lime\*.

#### YEAR THREE

##### Legumes – pea and bean family

Once again the patch is manured. The bean family take nitrogen from the air and store it in their roots. When they are harvested, any roots left in the soil will release nitrogen. Nitrogen breaks down and encourages green leaf growth so it is ideal for the next crop – the cabbage family or the brassicas.

#### YEAR FOUR

##### Brassicas – the cabbage family

Let the ground settle over winter as brassicas like to be planted firmly. Lime\* the soil once more before planting as their worst enemy, clubroot, doesn't care for alkaline, or limey, soil.

**ONIONS** and beets can travel with the carrot family as they don't need rich soil. The cucurbits – cucumbers, marrows, courgettes – can move around with the potatoes or the pea and bean family as they are 'hungry feeders' and like a rich soil.

Potato family <b>POTATOES</b>	Carrot family <b>ROOTS</b>	Pea family <b>LEGUMES</b>	Cabbage family <b>BRASSICAS</b>
Solanaceae	Apiaceae	Papillionaceae	Brassicaceae
Potato Aubergine Chilli Sweet pepper Tomato	Carrot Celeriac Celery Florence fennel Hamburg parsley Parsley Parsnip	Peas, mangetout, Snowpeas Runner bean Broad bean French bean Asparagus pea	Cabbage Brussels sprouts Broccoli Calabrese Chinese cabbage Chinese broccoli Kale Kohlrabi Mibuna greens Mizuna greens Mustard greens Pak choi Radish Rocket Seakale Sprouting broccoli Swede Texcel greens Turnip

Onion family	Cucumber family	Beet family	Lettuce family
Alliaceae	Cucurbitaceae	Chenopodiaceae	Asteraceae
Onions, globe, pickling, Japanese Garlic Japanese bunching onion Leek Shallots Spring onions Welsh onion	Cucumber Courgette Gherkin Marrow Melon Pumpkin Squash	Beetroot Chard Good King Henry Perpetual spinach Red orach Spinach	Lettuce Cardoon Chicory Endive Globe artichoke Jerusalem Artichoke Salsify Scorzonera

Lettuce, chicory, spring and Japanese bunching onions and salsify can be slotted in anywhere where there is space. Lettuce appreciates a little shade in summer so it grows well below tall plants like sweetcorn. Jerusalem artichokes make a 2m (6ft) screen in one season, so you need to think about where they will cast shade. Artichokes, cardoons, Good King Henry, rhubarb, seakale, scorzonera and sorrel are perennials and so need a permanent position. They don't need a prime site in full sun. Asparagus needs its own bed and produces for 20 years or more.

**MANURE or COMPOST** is generally applied in autumn and **LIME\*** in late winter, six weeks before you plan to sow or plant. At King Henry's Walk Garden the soil is already **alkaline** so stick to the manure and leave out the lime.

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