



KING HENRY'S WALK  
garden

## MAKING THE BEST USE OF THE SPACE



**Intercropping** is the art of taking advantage of planting gaps in various ways. It can be catch cropping – taking advantage of a temporary gap of slow growers – such as Brussels sprouts which will eventually need a large space but not for some time. So a quick crop like lettuce or radishes can go in between without disturbing them. It is important to keep in mind that the needs of the ‘host’ plant (the Brussels sprouts in this case) come first. Sometimes you may even need to sacrifice the intercrop if it is taking too much space. Always plant in the middle of the gap, keeping in mind the ultimate size of the intercrop and the time scale of each plant. When you are planting intensively, it is important to keep the soil in tip top condition by putting on plenty of muck and mulch.

HOSTS – slow growers	
Brussels sprouts	5 months
Cabbage (summer and autumn types)	4 – 6 months
Carrots (maincrop)	5 months
Cauliflower (winter types)	10 months
Celery (trench)	9 months
Leeks	4 – 5 months
Onions (spring planted sets)	4 – 5 months
Parsnips	4 months
INTERCROPS – fast growers	
Carrots (earlies)	9 weeks
Chard	8 – 12 weeks
Endive	7 – 12 weeks
Japanese bunching onions	8 weeks (for salad onions)
Lettuce	4 – 6 weeks (depending on variety)
Mustard greens	6 – 8 weeks
Radish	4 weeks
Rocket	4 – 12 weeks
Spinach	5 – 10 weeks
Turnips (earlies)	5 weeks
Cut-and-come-again-crops	4 weeks (approx)

**Underplanting** is another form of intercropping. It is growing shade lovers under taller plants that like sun. Leafy greens are ideal as the shady conditions will make the leaves grow bigger to absorb the light. A good combination is lettuce under sweet corn. The lettuce will get sun in the early part of the season and enjoy the semi-shade as the summer gets under way.

<b>TALL HOSTS</b>
Artichokes (globe) and cardoons
Beans (French and runner)
Courgettes on supports
Cucumbers on supports
Peas
Sunflowers
Tomatoes (climbing)
<b>SHORT PLANTS FOR UNDERPLANTING</b>
American land cress
Chicory
Chrysanthemum greens
Endive
Good King Henry
Lettuce
Cut-and-come-again saladini or orientals
Parsley
Spinach
Texcel greens

## Alternating narrow and wide

<b>TALL &amp; NARROW PLANTS</b>
Brussels sprouts
Carrots
Celery
Garlic
Leeks
Onions
Sweetcorn
<b>SHORT &amp; WIDE PLANTS</b>
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Chinese cabbage
Corn salad
Endive
Florence fennel
Kohlrabi
Lettuce
Mibuna and mizuna greens
Pak choi
Parsnips
Rocket
Radicchio

Text © Caroline Foley 2008