FIELD GUIDE · PRINT IT · KEEP IT DRY

FOOD WHEN THE SHOPS STOP

GROWING MY OWN FOOD

What to plant, how much, and when — a one-person, all-the-calories growing plan.

YOUR CLIMATE ZONE

Arid / Semi-Arid

Water is the primary constraint

NORTHERN HEMISPHERE EDITION

foodwhentheshopsstop.com/growing-my-own-food/

Free to print, copy and share · Built from the same data as the free seed calculator

READ THIS FIRST

The plan in one minute

This sheet tells you what to grow to feed **one adult for a year** from your own ground in a **Arid / Semi-Arid** climate — and the order and months to sow it. It uses the same yield, loss and land figures as the free calculator at foodwhentheshopsstop.com, and picks the crops that give the most food from the least land *in your zone*.

1,503 m²	630 kg	3,155	11
LAND PER PERSON (0.37 ACRE)	FOOD HARVESTED PER YEAR	KCAL A DAY, INCL. 10% BUFFER	CROPS IN THE PLAN

HOW TO USE IT

1. **Find the month you are in** on page 3 — it tells you exactly what to sow *now* and what to do if nothing is sowable yet.
2. **Work down the plan** (page 4) — calorie staples first, then storage crops, then quick wins and greens. The quantities are per person: multiply for everyone you are feeding.
3. **Check the calendar** (page 5) for sowing and harvest windows, and the months you will eat from store.
4. **Save seed from the start** (page 7). You can only keep this going if you keep your own seed.

Southern Hemisphere? Shift every date by six months

This is the **Northern Hemisphere edition**. In the south, download the Southern edition at **foodwhentheshopsstop.com/growing-my-own-food/** — or add six months to every date (a March sowing becomes September).

What this plan assumes

- **One reference adult** needing about 2,868 kcal a day (average of an adult man and woman, moderate activity), plus a 10% buffer.
- **All the calories come from your garden** — no shop, livestock or foraging. Anything else reduces the land you need.
- **Realistic home-garden yields**, with germination failure and pest loss built in. Treat the numbers as a starting point and plant a little more than you think.
- **You have the land and water.** The land figure is growing area only, before paths, rotation and fallow.

Your first 30 days

- [ ] **Pick your ground** — sunny, sheltered, near water. You do not need all 1,503 m² on day one: start with what you can look after and expand every season.
- [ ] **Get your seed** — open-pollinated varieties if you can. The shopping list is on page 9.
- [ ] **Sow what page 3 lists for this month**, staples first. Quick crops give you food in weeks while the slow ones grow.
- [ ] **Start a compost heap now** — soil fertility is what feeds next year's crop.
- [ ] **Sort out water** — catch rain from every roof you can, and mulch beds to hold moisture.
- [ ] **Keep a notebook** — what you sowed, when, and how it did. It becomes your most valuable tool by next year.

START HERE

What to sow, month by month

Find today's month. Everything listed is sowable *now* in your zone, with the most important crops first. (Southern Hemisphere: use the Southern edition, or add six months.)

Calorie staple · Storage crop · Quick win · Nutrition crop

January	— **Nothing to sow.** Prepare ground, make compost, gather and sort seed. Next sowing: **Feb**.
February	Spring onion · Pea (fresh) · Pepper **Quick crops only.** Prepare beds for **Cassava** in Apr.
March	Tomato (outdoor) · Pepper · French bean (fresh) **Quick crops only.** Prepare beds for **Cassava** in Apr.
April	Cassava · Sorghum · Peanut · Tomato (outdoor) · French bean (fresh) **Calories first.** Staples go in now — sow these before anything else.
May	Cassava · Sorghum · Peanut **Calories first.** Staples go in now — sow these before anything else.
June	— **Nothing to sow.** Prepare ground, make compost, gather and sort seed. Next sowing: **Sep**.
July	— **Nothing to sow.** Prepare ground, make compost, gather and sort seed. Next sowing: **Sep**.
August	— **Nothing to sow.** Prepare ground, make compost, gather and sort seed. Next sowing: **Sep**.
September	Spring onion **Quick crops only.** Prepare beds for **Barley** in Oct.
October	Barley · Pea (dried) · Shallot · Spring onion · Pea (fresh) **Calories first.** Staples go in now — sow these before anything else.
November	Barley · Pea (dried) · Shallot · Pea (fresh) **Calories first.** Staples go in now — sow these before anything else.
December	— **Nothing to sow.** Prepare ground, make compost, gather and sort seed. Next sowing: **Feb**.

CROP	% OF CALORIES	HARVEST	SOW / PLANT	LAND	SOW	HARVEST	KEEPS
CALORIE STAPLES the bulk of your energy — sow these first							
Cassava	35%	253 kg	**270 cuttings**	319 m²	Apr-May	Sep-Oct	—
Barley	15%	50 kg	**4.8 kg seed grain**	333 m²	Oct-Nov	Apr-May	1 yr+
Sorghum	15%	54 kg	**0.5 kg seed grain**	312 m²	Apr-May	Oct-Nov	1 yr+
Peanut	11%	22 kg	**1,530 seeds**	153 m²	Apr-May	Sep-Oct	1 yr+
Pea (dried)	11%	37 kg	**2,600 seeds**	181 m²	Oct-Nov	Apr-May	1 yr+
STORAGE CROPS harvested once, eaten through autumn and winter							
Shallot	11%	176 kg	**5,700 seeds**	169 m²	Oct-Nov	Apr-May	20 wk
QUICK WINS fast food while the staples grow							
Spring onion	<1%	4 kg	**200 seeds**	4 m²	Sep-Oct, Feb	Nov-Jan, Apr-May	—
NUTRITION CROPS greens and vegetables for vitamins and variety							
Tomato (outdoor)	<1%	18 kg	**16 seeds**	8 m²	Mar-Apr	Jul-Oct	—
Pea (fresh)	<1%	3 kg	**115 seeds**	8 m²	Oct-Nov, Feb	Mar-Apr, Nov-Dec	—
Pepper	<1%	8 kg	**23 seeds**	8 m²	Feb-Mar	Jul-Oct	6 wk
French bean (fresh)	<1%	3 kg	**100 seeds**	8 m²	Mar-Apr	May-Aug	—
TOTAL FOR ONE ADULT		**630 kg**		**1,503 m²**		**about 1.15 million kcal a year, including a 10% buffer**	

Per person. “Sow / plant” is what goes in the ground and already allows for germination failure and pest loss. Quick wins and greens get a small fixed bed, so their calories are a bonus.

S = sow H = harvest S/H = both • = still good in store

Bottom row: how many of your crops are available to eat each month — **lean months (red): Feb**

CROP	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Cassava				S	S				H	H		
Barley	•	•	•	H	H	•	•	•	•	S	S	•
Sorghum	•	•	•	S	S	•	•	•	•	H	H	•
Peanut	•	•	•	S	S	•	•	•	H	H	•	•
Pea (dried)	•	•	•	H	H	•	•	•	•	S	S	•
Shallot				H	H	•	•	•	•	S	S	
Spring onion	H	S		H	H				S	S	H	H
Tomato (outdoor)			S	S			H	H	H	H		
Pea (fresh)		S	H	H						S	S/H	H
Pepper		S	S				H	H	H	H	•	
French bean (fresh)			S	S	H	H	H	H				
Crops to eat	5	4	5	7	7	6	8	8	8	7	7	6

Northern Hemisphere dates — southern gardeners add six months. Sowing windows are the normal outdoor windows for Arid / Semi-Arid; a cold frame, cloche or fleece can stretch them by a few weeks either side.

CROP BY CROP

Notes on every crop in your plan

Short growing notes from the full guides at foodwhentheshopsstop.com. “Seed saving” shows how easy it is to keep your own seed from that crop.

Cassava STAPLE

Must be cooked before eating. Primary staple in tropical zones only.

~1,272 kcal per m²

Barley STAPLE

Hull-less varieties recommended for grid-down (easier processing). Spring sowing preferred.

~533 kcal per m² · seed saving: easy

Sorghum STAPLE

Drought-tolerant grain. Primary cereal in arid and tropical zones. Needs heat - challenging in cool temperate.

~569 kcal per m²

Peanut STAPLE

One of the most calorie-dense crops possible. Needs long warm season - challenging in cool maritime zones. Fixes nitrogen. Excellent fat source.

~828 kcal per m² · seed saving: easy

Pea (dried) STAPLE

Allow pods to dry on plant before harvest. Store in airtight containers. Grows as easily as fresh peas.

~700 kcal per m² · seed saving: easy

Shallot STORAGE

Each bulb multiplies into 8-12. Stores up to 9 months - better than onions.

~751 kcal per m² · seed saving: moderate

Spring onion QUICK

Ready in 8-12 weeks. Sow thickly and harvest young. White Lisbon is the most reliable variety.

~288 kcal per m² · seed saving: moderate

Tomato (outdoor) GREENS

Bush/determinate varieties most reliable outdoors. Blight risk in wet zones - choose resistant varieties.

~415 kcal per m² · seed saving: easy

Pea (fresh) GREENS

Dwarf varieties need no support. Succession sow every 3 weeks for continuous harvest.

~327 kcal per m² · seed saving: easy

Pepper GREENS

Needs long warm season. Suitable outdoors in Mediterranean zones, needs protection in maritime zones.

~323 kcal per m² · seed saving: moderate

French bean (fresh) GREENS

Dwarf varieties for windy sites. Very productive over long season. Pick regularly to encourage more.

~135 kcal per m² · seed saving: easy

KEEP IT GOING

Save your own seed from day one

Shop-bought seed will not be there next year. Every crop in your plan can be kept going — some almost effortlessly, some with care. Keep back your seed **before** you start eating the harvest.

Grown from tubers, slips or cuttings — keep some back

Cassava

There is no seed to save. Each year, keep back some of your best, healthiest, undamaged tubers (or slips and cuttings) and replant them. Store them cool, dark and frost-free. If a crop is hit by disease such as blight, do not replant from affected plants.

Easy — low crossing risk

Barley · Peanut · Pea (dried) · Tomato (outdoor) · Pea (fresh) · French bean (fresh)

These rarely cross with neighbours. Let your best plants mature fully, dry the seed thoroughly, and store it cool, dark and dry.

Moderate — grow one variety, or separate them

Shallot · Spring onion · Pepper

These cross with other varieties of the same crop. Grow just one variety for seed, or keep varieties well apart (the guide for each crop at foodwhentheshopsstop.com/seed-saving/ gives distances).

Harder — strict isolation needed

none in this plan

Nothing in this plan is in the hardest group.

RULES THAT SAVE YOU A LOT OF GRIEF

- **Do not save seed from F1 hybrids.** The seed will not come true. Open-pollinated or heritage varieties are what you want — buy them now if you can.
- **Biennials flower in their second year** (carrot, parsnip, beetroot, swede, onion, leek and the cabbage family). Keep a few of your best plants through winter, then let them flower and set seed.
- **Pick the best plants**, not the leftovers — healthy, true-to-type, and slow to bolt.
- **Dry it properly.** Seed stored damp rots or sprouts. Label it with crop, variety and year.
- **Keep a reserve.** Hold back a second year of seed if you can, in case of a crop failure.

Full seed-saving guides for every crop: **foodwhentheshopsstop.com/seed-saving-calculator/**

STORE IT · EAT IT

Keep the harvest, and stay well

Storing what you grow

- **Grains and dried beans/peas:** dry them fully, then keep in sealed, pest-proof containers somewhere cool and dry. They keep for a year or more.
- **Potatoes and roots:** store undamaged ones somewhere cool, dark, frost-free and ventilated. Check often and use soft or damaged ones first.
- **Onions, shallots and squash:** cure them first (a week or two drying in warm, airy conditions), then store dry and cool.
- **Carrots, parsnips, swedes and beetroot:** keep them in boxes of just-damp sand or soil in a cool place — or leave hardy roots in the ground and lift as needed.

A plate that keeps you healthy

- **Staples for energy** (potatoes, grains) plus **beans or peas for protein** — together they make a good protein pair.
- **Greens, brassicas and tomatoes** are your main source of vitamins C, A and K and folate — don't skip them because they look low in calories. Orange roots and squash add vitamin A.
- Eat the **fresh quick crops** and greens while they are in season; rely on stored staples and roots in the lean months (see the red months on the calendar).

Safety notes

- **Dried beans must be cooked properly.** Soak them, then boil hard for at least 10 minutes. Kidney, borlotti and runner beans are poisonous undercooked.
- **Never eat green or sprouting potatoes** — cut away green patches and sprouts, or discard the tuber.
- If you forage or add anything not on this sheet, be certain what it is first.

FEEDING MORE THAN ONE PERSON

PEOPLE	GROWING LAND	FOOD A YEAR	KCAL A DAY
1	1,503 m²	630 kg	2,868
2	3,007 m²	1,260 kg	5,736
4	6,013 m²	2,520 kg	11,472
6	9,020 m²	3,780 kg	17,208

Multiply every quantity in the plan by the number of adults. Children need less — the calculator at foodwhentheshopsstop.com works it out for your household.

GET READY

Your shopping list

Seed and planting stock for **one person** for a year. Tick them off as you get them — and buy **open-pollinated** varieties so you can save your own seed.

- [ ] **Cassava** — 270 cuttings
- [ ] **Barley** — 4.8 kg seed grain
- [ ] **Sorghum** — 0.5 kg seed grain
- [ ] **Peanut** — 1,530 seeds
- [ ] **Pea (dried)** — 2,600 seeds
- [ ] **Shallot** — 5,700 seeds
- [ ] **Spring onion** — 200 seeds
- [ ] **Tomato (outdoor)** — 16 seeds
- [ ] **Pea (fresh)** — 115 seeds
- [ ] **Pepper** — 23 seeds
- [ ] **French bean (fresh)** — 100 seeds

Basic tools

- [ ] Spade and fork
- [ ] Hoe and rake
- [ ] Hand trowel
- [ ] Watering can and water butts
- [ ] Wheelbarrow or buckets
- [ ] Seed trays or pots, and compost
- [ ] String, canes and labels
- [ ] Knife or secateurs
- [ ] Trays for drying seed
- [ ] Sealed tins and jars for storage
- [ ] Paper envelopes for saved seed
- [ ] A notebook and waterproof pen

GO DEEPER — EVERYTHING IS FREE AT FOODWHENTHESHOPSSTOP.COM

/zone/	The full calculator — your household, your crops, exact quantities.
/vegetables/	Growing guides for every crop, with sowing windows and storage.
/seed-saving-calculator/	How to save seed from each crop, and isolation distances.
/compost/	Compost and soil building, by climate zone.

A fair warning

Growing all your own food is hard, and the first year is mostly learning. Start now, **start small**, and add more each season — practise while the shops are still open. These numbers are careful estimates, not promises: soil, weather, pests and skill all change what you get.

Grow something this week.

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