



# Christmas Dinner Challenge

With a little bit of planning your Christmas dinner in 2016 can be all home grown (except maybe the turkey). It's very satisfying to achieve and you'll be amazed at the difference in taste over supermarket produce.

Here's a few suggestions of what to grow, none too difficult.

## **Roast Potatoes:**

Desiree are a good variety to grow in Dorset as they are slug resistant and crop well. Plant in late March or April depending on the weather. Lift in the autumn and store in a cool place until Christmas or can be left in the ground until needed as long as the ground doesn't get too saturated in the winter.

## **Sprouts:**

Grow from seed in the spring or buy small plants. Plant out in late Spring, be sure to protect from pigeons as they like the young plants. Sprouts can be left out until needed at Christmas, many gardeners say sprouts taste best after a good frost.

## **Carrots:**

Plant seeds in the late spring, a good over winter variety is best, Royal Chantenay and Autumn King 3 have worked well for me. Leave in the ground until needed at Christmas.

## **Parsnips:**

Plant seeds in the spring, leave in the ground until needed at Christmas. Like sprouts, parsnips are best after a frost.

## **Leeks:**

Start from seed in the Spring in a deep flowerpot. In late Spring once about 6"-10" high, plant out. Start cropping in late Autumn, but can be left in the ground until needed and will last well into New Year.

## **Sage & Onion Stuffing:**

Onions are best grown from seed in a pot at home until 6" tall and the weather warms up. Then plant them on your plot and grow until the autumn when they should be lifted, dried and stored somewhere cool and frost free until needed. A sage plant can be grown on the allotment, but is best in the garden or a pot near the house for easy picking when required.