**Terms on seed packets**

**These definitions are written to describe the shorthand terms** ***as they appear on a seed packet.***

**‘all year round**’: The seeds can be germinated and grown in any season — spring, summer, autumn or winter.

**‘botanical name**’: The scientific name of the plant, e.g. the carrot’s botanical name is *Daucus carota.*

**‘companion plant’**: A plant that grows well when alongside a specific other type of plant, e.g. carrots and beans are said to be companion plants.

**‘cover’**: Place soil or potting mix over the seed. The bigger the seed, the deeper it should be buried.

**‘cultivate’**: Work the soil over to loosen and aerate it, usually with a fork or hoe.

**‘depth’**: How deep to sow the seeds.

**‘firm down’**: Press soil or seed sowing mix onto the seeds. You can use your hands, a flat piece of wood or the end of a rake. This brings the seeds into close contact with the soil and the moisture it contains.

**‘frost risk has passed’**: When night temperatures no longer fall below 0ºC. In New Zealand this is usually after about August to October, depending on location.

**‘full sun’**: A position in the garden that receives sun for most of the day; usually an open garden or on the north side of a fence or building.

**‘garden bed’:** Cultivated soil in a garden.

**‘germination / germination period’:** The number of days from sowing till the seed shoots first appear above the surface of the soil or sowing mix.

**‘good for season’:** The seeds will still germinate well till the date listed.

**‘harden off’:** When seedlings have been grown in a glasshouse, indoors or in a cloche they should be moved to a sheltered outside location for several days so they become tougher, before planting in an open garden location.

**‘harvest’:** The time when the crop is ready for gathering in, e.g. ‘harvest 9 weeks’ means harvest after 9 weeks has passed.

**‘hybrid’:** A cross between two varieties of a given plant type. Hybrids are often bred to be faster growing, more disease resistant or to handle harsher conditions.

**‘maturity’:** When a plant is ready to harvest.

**‘moisten’:** Make the seeds damp, usually with a gentle sprinkle from a watering can or hose spray gun.

**‘partial shade’:** The seeds should be sown in a place that is mostly sunny, but with some shade.

**‘part sun / partial sun’:** The seeds should be sown in a mostly shady place, but with some sun.

**‘plant space’:** The ideal distance between one plant and the next in a row after any thinning that might have been needed.

**‘prick out’:** Careful removal of a tiny plant from where it was first germinated, then transplanting it into a larger pot or tray.

**‘row’:** Seeds are sown in a straight groove in the soil to form a line of plants. This makes it easier to tell which are plants and which are weeds and helps to set up the best spacings between plants.

**‘row space’:** The ideal distance between one row and the next for best growth. The bigger the plants, the wider the row space needs to be.

**‘seedbed’:** A part of the garden where the soil is soft and has been cultivated to a fine crumb texture. This allows the seeds to be in close contact with the soil and so they can easily push up through it.

**‘seed drill’:** A shallow groove in the soil that seeds are sown into.

**‘seedling’:** A small plant usually only with its seed leaves and its first couple of true leaves, raised from seed (not from a cutting).

**‘seed spacing’:** The ideal space between seeds when sown. Later thinning may be used to increase this spacing so each plant has more room to grow.

**‘sheltered’:** A frost-free location with little wind.

**‘sow’:** Place the seeds in the soil or potting mix. ‘Plant the seeds’ is often used instead of ‘sow the seeds’.

**‘sow before’:** Most of the seeds stored in this packet will only germinate if sown before this month and year.

**‘sow depth’:** How deep to bury the seeds when sowing. For example, small seeds like cabbages need to be sown about 1 cm deep, while large seeds such as beans are sown about 4 cm deep.

**‘sow direct’:** Sow straight into the soil you want the plant to complete its growth in. This instruction is given because the extra effort of transplanting is not needed, or, because some plants like carrots don’t do well if transplanted.

**‘sow under glass’:** Sow the seeds in a glasshouse or cloche so the temperature is warmer than the outside. Later they will need hardening off if they are to be planted in open ground.

**‘spacing’:** The distance between seeds when planted, or the distance between rows of plants. The larger the type of plant, the more spacing needed.

**‘spring to autumn’:** The seeds can be germinated and grown during spring, summer or autumn.

**‘successive crops’:** Crops sown at regular intervals so they mature one after the other.

**‘sunny position’:** Sow the seeds in a position in the garden that receives sun for most of the day.

**‘thin’:** Pull out some of the seedlings to achieve the ideal plant spacing for best long term growth.

**‘transplant’:** Plant seedlings that were germinated in pots, trays or a seedbed, into the open garden.

**‘well-drained position’:** Sow the seeds in earth that allows water to freely move down through it. Free draining soil usually has an open crumb structure and smells fresh and earthy. Poorly drained soil is often compacted and may smell stale.