



The Kelsae Exhibition Onion

**Achieve record weights and fantastic flavour
with this renowned show bench winner**



For further information on our seed range visit www.johnsons-seeds.com

Kelsae Onion Cultural Instructions

Ground Preparation

First, prepare your onion bed with plenty of rotted organic matter, dug in during the winter. Also apply lime at this time if necessary. We recommend a soil pH reading of 6.75 – 7.25. Kelsae Onions prefer a heavier soil which retains moisture, so make sure that the lighter soils are kept well watered.

Sowing

You should grow your seeds in late December to early January (although Christmas or Boxing Day are traditional days often chosen by growers).

Make sure your seed is the genuine strain. Evenly fill and firm your compost into boxes or trays. You can thinly broadcast your seeds or precision sow them individually. After sowing, sieve or sprinkle a 5mm covering of compost over the seed, then water in carefully and thoroughly so that the compost is fully moist.

Propagation

Cover the box or tray with a propagator lid, sheet of paper, glass or polythene and put in a warm place. The ideal germination temperature is 15-20°C, but it should not be lower than 15°C. When the seed has germinated, remove the covers and put the box or tray in an area with plenty of light. Keep the compost damp enough to sustain the seedlings. Maintain a temperature of around 18°C until Crook Stage (just before the second leaf). After this, reduce the temperature to 10°C to 13°C and gradually increase the ventilation if possible. The seeds need maximum light and ventilation (according to weather conditions) until the pricking-out stage.

Planting-Out

Top dress the growing area with 68g per square metre of fish, blood and bone mixture. We also recommend a final light application of lime before planting.

Plant out into your onion bed late in late April to early May, approximately 30cm apart. Water each plant well before planting out; this ensures that the root ball will easily slide out of the pot.

Dig each hole deep enough to allow enough to allow the roots to spread easily. Bury the white of the plant approximately 13-20mm deep, firming well. Do not over firm, and do not water unless it is absolutely necessary, but make sure the soil is moist.

Feeding

Apply a light dressing of high nitrogen fertiliser such as sulphate of ammonia two or three weeks after the planting out stage, at 17-26g per sq. metre at two to three week intervals. Never feed when the soil is dry. Water well if there has been no rain for 48 hours. Supplementary feeds can be given as required.

A light dressing of sulphate potash will help to harden and ripen the bulbs. This should be applied in mid-August and, if necessary, can be repeated in early September.

General Hints

- Take precautions against frost in early stages of growth.
- Do not force the plants with too much heat.
- Water sparingly except after applying fertiliser after planting out.
- For best results, spray regularly with fungicide.

Harvesting

As the bulbs mature towards the end of the growing season, bend the neck of each onion horizontally. This will check further foliage growth, help in ripening and direct any late growth to the bulbs. (Never force the neck, as this may severely check the bulb's growth and induce fungal infection).

As the bulbs ripen, gently remove any loose or damaged skin, but never remove more than one layer at a time. Once mature, the bulbs may be carefully lifted as required.

Dressing for Show

1. Lift the bulbs two weeks before a show.
2. Prepare the bulbs by peeling down very carefully to one complete skin.
3. Keep the bulbs in a dry, airy atmosphere, where they will dry off and colour up evenly.
4. Just before the show, tie the necks very carefully with uncoloured raffia, without breaking the skin.

What Are The Judges Looking For?

In assessing the merits of exhibits of vegetables, the following features are usually considered:

Condition

Cleanliness, freshness, tenderness and presence or absence of coarseness and blemishes.

Uniformity

All onions being alike in size, shape, condition and colour. When only one specimen is shown and points for uniformity are available, those points should be included.

Size

Large size is desirable if accompanied by quality (but only in those circumstances) as the production of large specimens of good quality requires more skill than that of the production of small specimens. The size of the vegetable most suitable for table use varies with the consumer.

Colour

This should reflect freshness, trueness to cultivar and maturity.

Merits: Large firm, well-ripened bulbs with thin necks and unbroken skins, free from any damage or disease. Sound and intact root plates.

Defects: Bulbs that are small, misshapen, lopsided or blemished, or that have soft or thick necks, or indicate moisture present under the skin, or have broken outer skins or have unsound root plates.

Advice for Judges

All specimens must be weighed and any which are 250g or under must be disqualified. Look for large, uniform, well ripened bulbs, of good shape, free from blemish, with roots trimmed and necks tied neatly with uncoloured raffia. At early summer shows, bulbs may be shown with tops trimmed, bulbs either dressed or as grown with roots washed.

Condition	6	Points
Size	5	Points
Uniformity	4	Points
Shape	3	Points
Colour	2	Points
TOTAL	20	Points



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