

# Our favourite edible seed suppliers

*If you're looking for inspiration for herbs and vegetables to grow at home, take a look at our selection of the best seed suppliers*

WORDS SORREL EVERTON

## CHILTERN SEEDS

There is always something to look forward to in Chiltern's herb and vegetable selections. This year it has included British basil – selected specifically for growing in the UK and climbing bean 'Cobra', encouragingly resistant to a variable British summer. Look out for beetroot 'Crapaudine', new to Chiltern Seeds. This is one of the oldest beetroot cultivars, carrot shaped and with an oddly rough skin (resembling its namesake derived from the French for toad). Underneath is a richly coloured flesh with superior flavour.

**01491 824675, [chilternseeds.org.uk](http://chilternseeds.org.uk)**

## JEKKA'S HERB FARM

If you are growing for flavour then herbs are an essential, and probably your best guide as to which to grow is award-winner Jekka McVicar. The nursery stocks 140 varieties of herb, with notables including winter purslane as an excellent winter salad crop; summer savoury, excellent with all forms of beans and pulses; and blue hyssop for its savoury minty/thyme flavour – and pollinator popular blue flowers. **01454 418878, [jekkasherbfarm.com](http://jekkasherbfarm.com)**

## MOLE SEEDS

An independent seed merchant with good selection sourced from some of the best seed producers. Anyone looking to current food trends should check the sections on crops best suited to baby leaf and microgreens harvesting. Although wholesale, Mole Seeds will supply anyone looking for larger quantities, so great for smallholding owners and gardening groups. **[wholesale.moleseeds.co.uk](http://wholesale.moleseeds.co.uk)**

## PENNARD PLANTS

A 2019 RHS Master Grower, Pennard Plants sells one of the largest selections of edible plants, heritage and heirloom seeds, fruits and herbs. All the stock is UK grown, many

of it by themselves in their Victorian walled garden in Somerset. For those keen to grow their own plant protein, Pennard stocks amaranthus and quinoa seeds.

**01749 860039, [pennardplants.com](http://pennardplants.com)**

## REAL SEEDS

Everything in Real Seeds' offering has been chosen only after trialling to check its success both in the vegetable garden and in the kitchen. All seed are open pollinated (non-hybrid) so you can collect and resow your own seed from one year to the next.

**01239 821107, [realseeds.co.uk](http://realseeds.co.uk)**

## SEA SPRING SEEDS

Every vegetable cultivar has been tested before it's included in the catalogue. For 2019 it is encouraging us to try 'mange tout' chilli peppers. Cultivars such as 'Hungarian Hot Wax' and 'Frigitello' can be harvested small and either fried or grilled to be eaten whole in the same way as Padrón peppers.

**01308 897898, [seaspringseeds.co.uk](http://seaspringseeds.co.uk)**

## SEED CO-OPERATIVE

An initiative was set up on the belief that the future of food needs to be rooted in a diversity of genetics and wildlife. All seed are from open pollinated varieties, adapted to organic growing systems. Finalists in the 2017 BBC Food and Farming Awards.

**01775 840592, [seedcooperative.org.uk](http://seedcooperative.org.uk)**

## SEEDS OF ITALY / FRANCHI

Paolo Arrigo who is a passionate seedsmen has declared a climate emergency on seed biodiversity. "In just 100 years, 94 per cent of the world's heritage veg has gone," says Paolo. Franchi focuses on the remaining six per cent, promoting them for their taste and regional diversity and including cultivars from the Slow Food Ark of Taste, the register of foods at risk of being lost.

**020 8427 5020, [seedsofitaly.com](http://seedsofitaly.com)**

## TAMAR ORGANICS

A good range of vegetables for the organic gardener along with helpful, clear, growing advice. Tamar Organics supports charity Joliba Trust working in central Mali to help fund horticultural projects.

**01579 371087, [tamarorganics.co.uk](http://tamarorganics.co.uk)**

## THOMAS ETTY

Among the range of vegetables offered by Thomas Etty are 52 perennial vegetables – an option for grow your own often overlooked. Examples such as sea orach, tuberous pea, perennial broccoli and skirret are worth having a look at, alongside more unusual veg choices, such as the pink 'Roscoff' onion from Brittany with its unique flavour good for eating raw or cooked and 'Tall Telephone' pea yielding eight to ten peas per large pod. **01460 298249, [thomasetty.co.uk](http://thomasetty.co.uk)**

