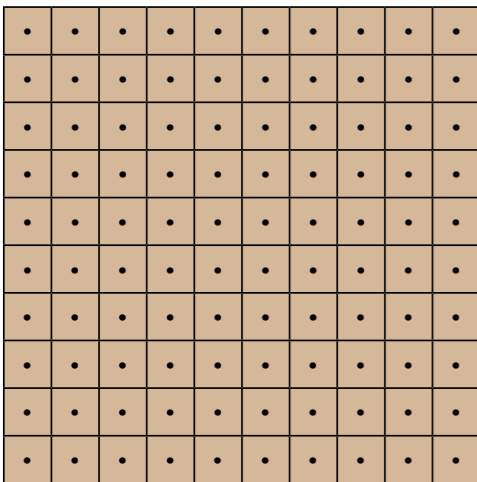


# Square metre gardening

*Clive Blazezy explains the huge yields and time saving from matrix rather than row sowing*

In these days of shrinking suburban gardens and expanding house sizes, it is comforting to reflect on how little space is needed to be self-sufficient in vegetables - in fact, just 10 square metres of space, or 3x3 paces across. But with the advent of matrix sowing, even greater yields can be gained from the same space.

10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10



One square metre grid with a seed sown at 10cm weldmesh spacings hence 100 plants possible

Plants need sunlight to grow and every square millimetre of soil will produce food if seeds are sown between traditional rows. The concept challenges the traditional method of sowing seeds in rows and leaving space between the rows for hoeing the weeds because in a matrix there are no rows!

Either two or three seeds are sown in each square at the recommended spacing and some thinning of over-sown seeds is required later.

This method saves seed and thinning time provided the seed germination is high. Most seeds have an 80-90% germination rate so there will be some gaps if single seeds are sown; these can be resown after germination as the gaps appear. The density of the crops should help reduce weeding in the long run as weeds are smothered.

With matrix sowing it is important not to walk on the specially prepared beds; we use a flat plank and sow into 10cm wire mesh (see picture opposite).

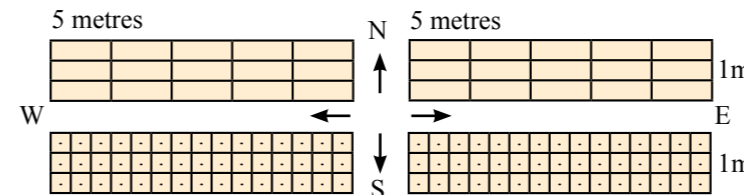
We are testing this method at Heronwood this spring in our mini-plot and will take photos to compare results to our row-sowing methods described in our mini-plot (see top right).

In theory, we should get a 330% increase on row-sown carrots, onions and beets because of the filling out between the rows - whilst with crops sown edge to edge with no gaps for hoeing, the yields will be the same. There is only one qualification and that is—the soil should be weed free and of fine tilth or the weed competition will reduce yields.



Our mini-plot uses traditional row-sowing planting methods, but can be converted to matrix sowing. (See below)

## Square metre spring trial - mini-plot Heronwood



Equivalent matrix spacing

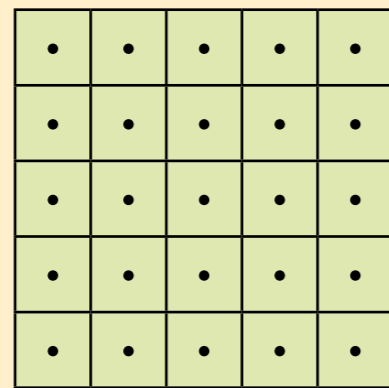
## Step-by-step matrix sowing

- 1) Till weed-free soil to a fine tilth.
- 2) Measure out matrix using
  - a) 10cm square weldmesh (see below)
  - or
  - b) bamboo or stakes in matrix pattern
- 3) Sow a single seed (or 2 or 3) into the centre of space (seed is sown twice as deep as the width of seed). Thin or re-sow as required
- 4) Keep watered up to 14 days.
- 5) Replace gaps with second sowing

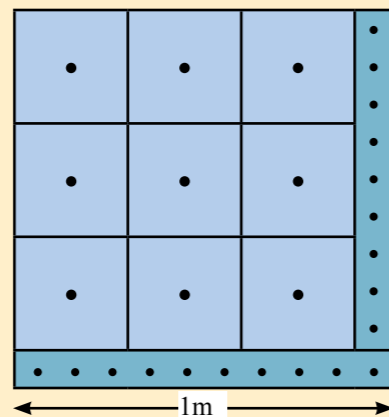


## MATRIX SEED SPACING

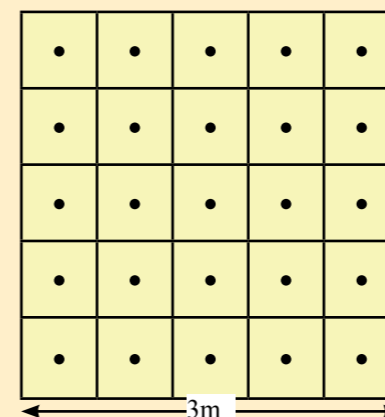
5cm apart = 400 plants/m <sup>2</sup>	
Winter/Spring Sowing	Spring/Summer Sowing
	chives
	radish
	turnip
10cm apart = 100 plants/m <sup>2</sup>	
Winter/Spring Sowing	Spring/Summer Sowing
onion	bush bean
pea	spring onion
beet	
carrot	
salsify	
scorzonera	
15cm apart = 36 plants/m <sup>2</sup>	
Winter/Spring Sowing	Spring/Summer Sowing
leek	climbing bean
parsnip	



20cm apart = 25 plants/m<sup>2</sup>



30cm apart = 9 plants + 10cm apart = 19 plants



60cm apart = 25 plants/9m<sup>2</sup>



20cm apart = 25 plants/m <sup>2</sup>	
Winter/Spring Sowing	Spring/Summer Sowing
celery	chicory
garlic	dill
mache/mizuna	fennel
spinach	corn
broad bean	basil
30cm apart = 9 plants/m <sup>2</sup>	
Winter/Spring Sowing	Spring/Summer Sowing
aparagus	parsley
cauliflower (mini)	lettuce
potato	watercress
strawberry	
tatsoi	
pak choy	
cabbage	
lettuce	
silverbeet	
endive	

50cm apart = 4 plants/m <sup>2</sup>	
Winter/Spring Sowing	Spring/Summer Sowing
kale	okra
broccoli (40cm min)	Brussels sprouts
	ground cherry
	capsicum
60cm apart = 25 plants/9m <sup>2</sup>	
Winter/Spring Sowing	Spring/Summer Sowing
	tomato
	eggplant
1metre apart = 1 plant/m <sup>2</sup>	
Winter/Spring Sowing	Spring/Summer Sowing
artichoke	rockmelon
	zucchini
	cucumber
2 metres apart = 4 plants/9m <sup>2</sup>	
Winter/Spring Sowing	Spring/Summer Sowing
	watermelon
	pumpkin