

## ONION SETS & SHALLOTS

Cultural Details: ZZ600

### Sets

Onion sets (there are approximately 200 per kilo) are basically immature onions grown professionally from seed. This means they will mature more quickly, and are less choosy about soil conditions. Where varieties are heat treated, the treatment is designed to kill off the flower embryos within the bulb, to lessen the chances of bolting (running to seed). Treated sets have a darker skin colour and have low moisture content. Initial growth may be restricted but soon accelerates. The heat treatment is not completed until March, so we dispatch as soon as possible during April.

On receipt of the sets, if planting cannot be carried out immediately, spread the sets out in a cool, bright area to slow down sprouting.

Planting may take place in March and April, space rows about 25cm apart, unless using mechanised lifting equipment, in which case space rows accordingly. Sets are placed around 10cm apart, with the tips just showing. If possible, realign any sets which are dislodged by birds, frost etc, in the early stages.

Keep weed-free to prevent competition for nutrients. Harvest when the majority of the foliage has turned yellow and collapsed. Air-dry the bulbs, outdoors if the weather remains dry and sunny, otherwise indoors, for 2-3 weeks, then store in trays, net bags etc., to keep plenty of air around the bulbs.

### Shallots

Shallots (approx. 70 per kilo) are mature small bulbs which multiply up around 10-fold, to form clusters of small bulbs which have a huge range of culinary uses, whether fresh, cooked or pickled.

Shallots can be planted outside from February onwards, around 15cm apart, row spacing as above. Keep weed-free, and harvest July-August when the foliage turns yellow. Separate the individual shallots, clean off debris and dry and store as above.

*Information provided for guidance only, as cultural practices and climatic circumstances vary.*