



pumpkin.

Sow: Second week in April, indoors or in a heated propagator. Soak seeds overnight before sowing on their side.

Soil: Plenty of well-rotted manure, comfrey mulch. Add food waste from kitchen in a trench up to one month before. Can grow on compost heap.

Sun: Full sun, no frosts.

Grow: Continue to pot up in food-rich compost until frosts have passed and plant out on small mound to prevent rots. Feed with comfrey tea once a week until fruits set, then feed three times a week to swell fruits. Keep well-watered.

Harvest: Cut back all leaves around the fruit to allow it to ripen in last week of August, and place straw underneath to prevent rots. Harvest mid-October, leaving an inch of stem either side of the stalk. Leave to cure in the sun or on a windowsill for 10 days. Many varieties will keep until mid spring.

Problems: Protect plants from slugs with cloches in their early stages. Do not plant out too early.

For more advice on growing and cooking pumpkins, visit the Stylish Gardening Blog: fennelandfern.co.uk