

broad beans.

Sow: In final position from February to April, 5cm deep, 23cm apart. Protect early sowings with cloches.

Soil: Work in plenty of well-rotted manure the previous autumn. Rots on heavy soils: incorporate some sand to improve drainage.

Sun: Full sun.

Grow: Stake taller types, and pinch out the top shoots when the plants are fully flowering to encourage heavy cropping. Water well, especially during dry periods.

Harvest: Best picked when young and tender. Test once pods start to swell. Twist and pull the pod away from plant.

Problems: Blackfly can be a serious problem. Pinch out the top shoots and spray with a weak concentration of soap flakes).

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