

# OLIVER KAY



## CROP REPORT

### Spring 2025

At the time of writing, we are looking ahead to summer and hopefully a little sunshine, giving us a sense of optimism for the upcoming season of fantastic British produce. The UK's Autumn Budget has introduced significant changes, including increases in the National Living Wage and changes to National Insurance thresholds, which will impact us all within the industry.

At Oliver Kay, we are committed to managing these challenges by implementing operational efficiencies and cost-reduction programs. While some costs will need to be passed on to ensure we can continue to serve our customers effectively, we recognise that this is a shared industry issue that affects both our customers and suppliers.

Our dedicated team continue to source the best quality products from our long-term supply partners, and we're proud of our close relationships with growers and cooperatives, ensuring you have complete transparency and traceability. Should you have any questions, please contact our team who will be happy to help.

Orders can be placed over the phone during working hours, or online via our website or app - 24 hours a day - 7 days a week to suit your needs!

As always, we thank you for your continued support in choosing us as your fresh produce supplier.



Contact our team 01204 385463  
or order online at [www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk](http://www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk) or via the Oliver Kay app

# Growing Conditions

UK planting is underway, and conditions are generally good. Statistically, 2025 has been drier and warmer than average, although sunshine has been below what we typically expect. The Met Office's 3 month outlook is expecting a warm spring, with an average level of precipitation with a slightly higher level of wind than previous years. As is typical in spring, the risk of rain and wind reduces as we move further into the period, and wetter conditions are more likely to be seen across the northwest.

## Spain

This winter brought substantial rainfall and devastating flooding that affected many of our dedicated suppliers, thanks in-part to a slow-moving low-pressure system known as DANA. We extend our gratitude to all our suppliers for their resilience and commitment to maintaining supply during such extreme weather conditions.

In early March, Spain faced chilly and wet conditions. These weather issues are impacting fruit colouring, particularly affecting peppers. A combination of adverse weather and decreased pesticide usage is leading to challenges with a pest known as thrips. Trials of new resistant varieties are currently underway, with plans for their introduction next year.

## Morocco

Having a similar geographical location to the Canary Islands, Moroccan yields are low due to less-than-ideal growing conditions and a new virus-resistant variety that isn't performing as expected. However, long-term forecasts indicate improvements, so we can anticipate better yields by early April onwards. Harvesting of the first Dutch new season crop is set for late March, though volumes are low and prices remain high; this will help supplement the low production from Morocco.

## The Canaries

The Canaries have been affected by heavy rain and flooding, experiencing their first frost in a long time. Temperatures remain cold with daytime highs only reaching 10°C and night time lows dropping to 1°C. This situation is similar to the weather in Morocco, though conditions are expected to improve in the coming weeks.

# Challenges & Looking Ahead

## Challenges

- **Potatoes** - The wet harvest conditions for the 2024/25 crop have impacted storage, leading to rots and breakdowns. This has meant that the crop has had to be heavily selected in order to meet customer specifications. Late planting has resulted in potentially lower availability of baking potatoes, causing supply challenges as the season ends. Although initial predictions indicated a need for imports, this has not occurred. Careful crop selection will help manage availability until the new season, despite ongoing challenges.
- **Shipping has been the main challenge** through the start of 2025. Atlantic storms have resulted in vessels arriving at UK ports out of sequence, some ships are missing the UK altogether and diverting to offload in The Netherlands. This creates further delays to arrivals.
- **Spain has experienced poor weather recently**, with rainfall in the first nine days of March exceeding the average for the entire month. The significant rainfall is anticipated to bring an end to the four-year drought in the country.
- **Peppers from Spain** have suffered the most, with poor weather and thrip damage this season. Dutch supply may have to start earlier than planned to maintain supply and quality.

## In Season

- Yorkshire forced rhubarb is underway.
- Lancashire spring greens and kales have just restarted after frosts.
- For this year's crop of UK potatoes, some growers in Suffolk and Cornwall are beginning to plant early salad varieties under fleece due to favourable dry conditions. Ground temperatures are not yet ideal for the main crop to be put in the group. A positive weather forecast may improve soil conditions, but seed availability remains a concern due to delivery delays, which might lead to a wider range of varieties being used this season, potentially impacting yields, but it is too early to tell.
- UK root crops including carrots, parsnip and swede.

## Looking Forward

- English Heirloom tomato - late May.
- Jersey new potatoes are a little pricey but available to pre-order now.
- UK asparagus starts early May for approx 6 weeks.

**FIND OUT MORE.....**

about the passionate growers and producers who bring you the freshest, UK-grown produce on our **interactive map**

# What's in season


At Oliver Kay, we work with trusted growers sourcing the very best seasonal produce from our range of local and international suppliers. The below guide will advise on product availability over the spring months, but due to the nature of fresh produce there are many external factors that impact supply. Please check availability with our team or by using the online ordering before listing a product on your menu.

## Key - UK Seasonal Best

### Vegetables

**Broccoli (Spain & UK)** - Spanish supply has been good, with cooler and wetter conditions favouring this crop, with supply taking us through until summer. UK crop is currently being planted and expected late-June.

**Cabbage (UK)** - The quality of Red and White UK cabbage this year is excellent, with a plentiful supply of white cabbage. Red cabbage availability is lower and has a shorter shelf life due to its higher sugar content. To maintain consistent availability and quality, a contingency crop from Spain is anticipated in May and June.


 **Carrot (UK)** - Supply of UK crop is currently good and is expected to see us through to the new season with imports only being used for larger sizes. Planting for the new crop has been well underway since early March due to the favourable weather.

**Cauliflower (UK)** - UK quality looks good, head sizes will be to the bottom end of specification initially and will increase as the weather improves into spring. Growers are taking advantage of dry conditions and planting for summer is underway.


**Onion (Netherlands, UK & Egypt)** - Yellow and red onions supply is good from the Netherlands. Late rains in the UK last autumn caused some water damage but crops put into store are expected to be ok into summer. Red onion supply will move to Egyptian mid-April for around 6 weeks as planned.

**Parsnip (UK)** - Quality and supply are good with the expectation that we will move into imported crop from the second week in June. Planting started early due to the good weather conditions experienced in March.

**Potato (UK)** - Crop has had to be heavily selected. Supply of baking potatoes could become difficult as we enter the final stages of the season. Looking ahead to the 2025/26 crop, some growers in Suffolk and Cornwall have taken advantage of the dry conditions and started planting early salad varieties under fleece. It is likely there will be a wider range of varieties used this season.

 **Rhubarb (UK)** - Looking forward to UK harvest - no reported issues.

**Savoy Cabbage (Portugal & UK)** - Portuguese will take us through until June when UK crop starts, UK planting is going well.

 **Spring Cabbage & Kale (Spain & UK)** - Imports have been required through February and March due to UK frosts. UK started again in third week of March which was helped by an improvement in light levels and recent temperatures.

**Swede (UK)** - Quality overall is good, reduced availability is holding pricing high, more lucrative crops such as cereals and sugar beet are competing for land.

**Tenderstem® (Spain, Portugal & UK)** - Mainly Portuguese and Spanish, quality is good, UK expected late June/July, planting already underway.



## Did you know? ....

For seasonal recipe ideas from our development chefs, along with customer dish ideas and provide inspiration on how to use the latest seasonal produce, [click here](#).



[www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk](http://www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk)

01204 385463

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## Salads

**Aubergine (UK)** - Very good with no concerns.

**Courgette (UK)** - Very good with no concerns.

**Cucumber (Dutch)** - Supply good with low volumes of new season Dutch now running alongside, no issues and quality is good.

**Leaf - Baby Leaf (UK, Italy & Spain)** - Supply is a mix of UK glasshouse and Italian and Spanish supply, quality is very good without any problems expected.

**Leaf - Fancy Leaf (UK & Spain)** - Spanish supply is good despite the heavy rain. UK expected in June.

**Leaf - Cos, Gem and Iceberg (Spain)** - Low availability. Some pink rib staining will be seen towards the end of March due to heavy rains in the Murcia region. Advice is to remove outer leaf as this is unfortunately unavoidable. Improvement is expected early April and UK will start in June.

**Peppers (Spain)** - The winter season has been particularly challenging due to poor conditions in Spain and reduced pesticide availability, leading to a surge in thrips infestations. These pests damage crops, resulting in destroyed fruit, increased waste in the supply chain, and skin defects that cause greater skin marking.

**Cherry Tomatoes (Mediterranean)** - Production is low and poor conditions are affecting ripening. Fruit may be towards the larger size due to slow ripening.

**Round Tomatoes (Morocco)** - Moroccan with Canaries as a contingency supply. Production volumes are low, quality and shelf life have been challenging due to plant viruses.

## Fruit

**Blackberries (Mexico)** - Main supply is currently from Mexico, with quality of Erendira very good.

**Blueberries (Chile)** - Supply from Chile is strong, with sea freight preferred for shipping. The available variety is Blue Gold, and the quality is good.

**Grapes (Various)** - Availability has been challenging due to shipping. For all varieties, we hope to see an improvement in shipping as we move into spring when weather patterns are typically smoother in the Atlantic.

For green grapes, quality has been good, particularly for autumn Crisp and Sweet Globe from South Africa, with supply of Indian Thompson expected to begin in April.

Currently, red grape options include Sweet Calibration from Namibia and South African Tawny, with Peruvian grapes available as a backup.

**Raspberries (Spain)** - Main supply is Spanish. Nicalia variety supply has been lower due to the poor conditions in the Mediterranean.

**Strawberries (Morocco)** - Main supply is Moroccan Palmeritas variety, and these may have to be supplied longer than planned until Spanish Leticia become available.

## Exotics

**Asparagus (Mexico & UK)** - Mexican supply until UK season starts early May for approximately 6 weeks.

**Baby Corn (India)** - Supply is mainly India with Thailand as a backup, quality is good.

**Baby Vegetables (South Africa)** - Quality is good but supply is challenging, and rainbow carrot is very limited due to water damage.

**Beans (Morocco & Egypt)** - Quality is very good with Rwanda in the background as a backup. Our grower is planning a trial this summer with a crop of fine beans; this variety is suited to warmer conditions. If successful, we will receive them in July.

**Butternut (Various)** - Portuguese and Spanish will end in April, South African supply will be phase in as European finishes.

**Chillies (Spain & Morocco)** - All chillies, in particular jalapenos, have been challenging this spring, with new jalapeno varieties resistant to pests causing shortages. Red and green long chillies from Morocco have performed better.

**Figs (Brazil)** - Quality is good and will take use through until summer.

**Garlic & Ginger (Various)** - Availability and quality of Brazilian ginger has been good, moving into Chinese supply through May until new season Brazilian starts again mid-summer. Garlic from Spain is still affected by poor weather, so supply remains mainly Chinese and is expected to take us through into summer.

**Limes (Brazil)** - Quality is very good, but supply has been very challenging due shipping.

**Mango (Brazil)** - Brazilian Palmer supply moved to Tommy Atkins in May, quality is good.

**Shallots (France)** - French supply has tightened up. Late rains last year have reduced supply, and ongoing weather problems could affect planting for new season.

**Sweet Potatoes (Egypt)** - Quality is very good.

**Sugar Snaps & Mangetout (Egypt)** - Quality and supply are good with Guatemalan running alongside and will take over from April.

## Find out....

what produce is in season locally and overseas all year round to help choose produce when it is available and at its best [here](#).

## Lee's Top Picks

- Jersey Royals
- Asparagus
- Spring greens
- Summer leaf

## Seasonal Menu Inspiration: Poached Cod, Haricot Bean & Spring Broth

Here's a seasonal recipe idea.

Find this recipe and many more on our website [oliverkayproduce.co.uk](http://oliverkayproduce.co.uk)



### Ingredients:

- 4 portions cod
- 1 courgette peeled into ribbons
- 1 corn on the cob
- 100g sugar snap peas julienne
- 100g fresh peas
- 300g parsley leaves
- 100g sunflower oil
- 300g Baked Beans
- 500g Fish stock
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 4 large wild garlic leaves finely chopped
- Lemon juice
- Salt

### Method:

-Make the parsley oil by putting the leaves and 300g of sunflower oil into a thermomix and setting at 80c for 8 mins, strain and cool, or alternatively, heat the oil and parsley gently, then blitz well and pass.

-Deskin the fish & lay the skin between two pieces of parchment in between two baking sheets, bake at 180c for 6 -10 minutes until crisp.

-Place the cod in a vac pac pouch with a little olive oil and lemon zest, seal and cook in a water bath at 46c for 45 minutes. Or poach in a hot fish stock (not simmering) for 10-15 minutes until just starting to flake.

-Grill the corn on the cob until charred slightly, cut them off with a knife.

-Drain the tomato sauce from the baked beans and use in a burger dressing, wash the beans well.

-Bring the fish stock to the boil and add the peas, sugar snaps, and cook for 2 mins then add the courgette ribbons, add the corn, parsley oil, wild garlic leaves, lemon juice and washed beans, correct seasoning, and serve with the poached fish and crispy skin.

## We've been shortlisted!

We're thrilled to announce we've been shortlisted for **Food Brand of the Year** at The Caterer Supplier Awards.

The Caterer Supplier Awards celebrate the most creative and innovative food, drink, equipment and technology suppliers in the hospitality industry, with each category judged by an independent panel of industry experts.

For more information about The Caterer Supplier Awards, [click here](#). We're excited for what will be a great event – and keeping our fingers crossed when winners are announced in April!



For enquiries or more information about any of the products mentioned in the Crop Report, or to place an order, please contact our team who will be happy to help:



Call the office on **01204 38546**  
or order online at [oliverkayproduce.co.uk](http://oliverkayproduce.co.uk)  
or via the **Oliver Kay app**