

# Spring garden guide

Expert advice from *Jon Lamb*



## Grow your own vegetables

Vegetable	Sept	Oct/ Nov	Seed or Seedling	Raised bed	Con- tainer	Semi shade*	Water
Beans dwarf	L	✓	S	✓	2	✓*	...
Beetroot	✓	✓	S	✓	2		..
Broccoli	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	✓	...
Cabbage small	✓	✓	✓	✓	2	✓	...
Capsicum	L	✓	✓	✓	3		..
Carrots	✓	✓	S	✓	1		..
Cucumber	L	✓	✓	✓	2		...
Eggplant	L	✓	✓	✓	3		..
Garlic	✓		**	✓	3		..
Lettuce hearting	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	✓*	...
Lettuce non-hearting	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	✓*	...
Melon		✓	✓	✓	1		..
Onions (brown)	✓		**	✓	1		..
Peas	✓		✓	✓	2	✓	..
Potatoes	✓		sets	✓	1		..
Pumpkins		✓	✓	✓	1		..
Radish	✓	✓	S	✓	3	✓	...
Rocket	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	✓	...
Silverbeet	✓	✓	✓	✓	2	✓	..
Sweetcorn		✓	✓	✓	1		...
Tomatoes	L	✓	✓	✓	3	✓*	..
Zucchini	L	✓	✓	✓	2		...

L – late    \*\* seedling only    \* during summer    1 = not ideal    2 = ok    3 = excellent  
 • low    .. medium    ... high water use

### Tomatoes

Blossom end rot, a problem that causes the bottom end of the tomato to turn black is sure to be a big problem this season. It is associated with uneven watering, particularly letting the plants' roots dry out. Water regularly, giving the plants a soak, not a squirt and don't forget the mulch. It really does reduce water losses from the soil.

### Ants

If you often experience problems with scale insects or aphids, you probably have ants in your garden. Ants spread these insects from one plant to another. They can also carry plant diseases around with them. Look for the ants' nesting places and spot spray the area with an insecticide that specifically states it is for ant control.

## Spots and rots

Problem	Target	Looks like	Action
Powdery mildew	Roses, some vegetables	Powdery white material on new leaves, stems and buds.	Spray with one part milk, 10 parts water as soon as noticed.
Black spot	Roses	Leaves develop black spots, turn yellow and then drop.	Spray with Mancozeb or rose spray.
	Apples	Black spot on leaves and later fruits.	Spray with Mancozeb.
Freckle	Apricots	Small black or brown spots on fruits.	Must spray as flower buds just begin to burst open.
Leaf curl	Peaches, nectarines	Distorted bubble-like growths on leaves.	Spray with copper oxychloride as soon as buds begin to burst.

## Kitchen herbs

Kitchen herbs lend themselves to container growing and planting in a raised bed.

Herb	Size	Pot	Raised bed	Some shade	Water	Ease
Basil	30-60cm x 20-40cm	Lg	✓	-	...	3
Borage	90cm	-	✓	-	...	3
Chamomile	25cm	Lg	✓	✓	...	2
Chervil	60cm	-	✓	✓	...	2
Chives	30cm	✓	✓	✓	..	3
Coriander	90cm	✓	✓	✓	...	1
Dill	90cm	-	✓	✓	...	2
Fennel	1.2m	-	✓	✓	•	3
Fenugreek	90cm	-	✓	-	...	2
Garlic	60cm	-	✓	-	...	2
Lemongrass	1.5m	✓	✓	-	...	2
Mint	20-60cm	✓	-	✓	..	3
Oregano	75cm	✓	✓	-	..	3
Parsley	30cm	✓	✓	✓	..	3
Rosemary	60cm	Lg	✓	-	•	3
Sage	30-60cm	✓	✓	-	..	2
Tarragon	60cm	-	✓	-	...	2
Thyme	varies	✓	✓	-	..	2

Lg – large    • low    .. medium    ... high water use

## Quick colour with annuals

Plant well established seedlings in small groups or containers for welcome colour.

Flower	Sept	Oct/Nov	Sun	Semi*
Alyssum	✓	✓	✓	✓
Begonia	✓	✓		✓
Cosmos	✓	✓	✓	
Dianthus	✓	✓	✓	✓
Impatiens		✓		✓
Marigold	✓	✓	✓	
Pansy	✓		✓	✓*
Petunia		✓	✓	
Portulaca		✓	✓	
Salvia		✓	✓	
Snapdragon	✓	✓	✓	✓
Verbena	✓	✓	✓	
Zinnia		✓	✓	

\* during summer

# – Spring garden guide

Expert advice from *Jon Lamb*



## Crop watch

	Look for	Organic	Standard
<b>Aphids</b>	Small (1.5-2mm) soft bodied, green or black insects clustered on new tip growth or leaves.	Squirt tip growth with water.	Use non-toxic pest oil or Confidor if spraying essential.
<b>Caterpillars</b>	Soft bodied (20-60mm). Can be green, brown or grey.	Use non-toxic chemicals such as Success, Dipel.	Use non-toxic chemicals such as Success, Dipel.
<b>Earwigs</b>	Small (10-15mm) brown insects with menacing 'forceps' at rear end.	Trapping.	Populations reduce through regular trapping (bowls containing linseed).
<b>Scale</b>	Small red or brown scales on stems and leaves of roses, citrus and many ornamentals.	Spray with eco oil.	Spray with pest or eco oil.
<b>Slugs and snails</b>	Look for clear slime trails after night feeding.	Numbers quickly reduced by trapping i.e. place board raised just above ground adjacent to feeding area.	Spray plants with coffee (one teaspoon coffee to one litre of warm water). If using baits, use products non-toxic to animals.
<b>White fly</b>	Very small flies with white wings usually found when vegetables are shaded.	Spray with organic pest oil or potassium soap.	Spray with Confidor or pest oil.

## Fertilising the garden

Plants	Comment
<b>Vegetables and annuals (established)</b>	Apply liquid fertiliser (blossom boosters) fortnightly to improve fruit quality and length of flowering.
<b>Container plants, evergreens, topiary plants, fruit trees and others</b>	Apply liquid seaweed immediately to stimulate root activity. Follow with a three month controlled release fertiliser.
<b>Citrus trees (also other evergreen fruits)</b>	Apply liquid seaweed product immediately. Follow with a complete fertiliser i.e. nitrogen, phosphorus, potash and trace elements. A mature tree will need 1kg. Repeat this application in early summer and early autumn.
<b>Deciduous fruit trees</b>	Apply a complete garden fertiliser during early September. Mature trees need 1-1.5kg (dwarf 0.5-0.75kg). Use a follow up application in early autumn using one kilogram per tree (dwarf 0.5-0.75kg).
<b>Roses</b>	Apply a balanced organic fertiliser in early spring - follow manufacturer's directions. For roses that bloom continually, use follow up applications in late spring and again in early summer.
<b>Lawns</b>	Wait until vigorous lush spring growth slows down before fertilising (late October). Use a complete fertiliser blended specifically for lawns as they contain the right balance of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash.

## Herbs

It's a good time to start a herb collection. Some herbs can be grown from seed or cuttings. However, at this time of the year, most garden centres have a good range in pots ready to plant. Most herbs can be grown successfully in containers.

## Spraying

Apples and pears - the first spray to control codling moth should not be applied until two weeks after petal fall. Use Malathion for this spray as insecticides containing carbaryl have a thinning effect on fruit set. Subsequent sprays using carbaryl should be applied every three to four weeks.

## Planting

Spring is an ideal time to establish both Australian and exotic trees and plants. It's also a good time for re-potting and moving plants from pots into the garden. However, don't rush the planting of annuals and vegetables. Seedlings or seed established in early October will grow just as well as those planted now. There is still value in covering the ground with clear plastic to warm the soil if you want to get plants established early.

## Feeding

Most plants will soon be bursting into new spring growth. If they haven't been fed with fertiliser lately, they will soon run short of nutrients. An application of a seaweed product followed by a balanced fertiliser containing nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus will benefit most plants.

## Bulbs

Bulbs about to bloom will benefit from an application of a complete fertiliser (a measuring cup to a square metre). Bulbs that have finished flowering should not be disturbed until the leaves die down naturally as the bulbs need time to restore energy for next year's growth.

## Citrus

As citrus trees mature, they often become scraggy, particularly near the centre of the tree. Spring is a good time to remove old and dead wood from the tree. Take the opportunity to thin out the number of branches. This will allow more light to penetrate and increase the tree's cropping potential.

## Weeds

Don't let large, flat weeds spoil your lawn. They are easily controlled by spraying with a selective weedicide containing MCPA. Some mixtures should not be used on lawns containing buffalo.

## Mulch

There is no better way to conserve moisture and keep your plants in good condition during the growing season than to cover their roots with a thick layer of mulch.