



What To Plant And Do In The Food Garden In March

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WHAT TO PLANT IN MARCH (BALLARAT & DISTRICT) *

FROM SEED	FROM SEEDLING	IN SEEDLING BOXES #
Broad Beans	Broccoli	Broccoli
Beetroot	Brussels sprouts	Brussels sprouts
Fennel	Cabbage	Cabbage
Lettuce	Cauliflower	Cauliflower
Pak Choi	kale	Kale
Parsnip	Lettuce	Lettuce
Pea	Pak Choi ¹	Onion
Radish	Silverbeet	Pak Choi ¹
Rocket	Spring onion	Spring onion
Spinach		
Spring onion		
Turnip		

* Key vegetables only, not all vegetables that can be planted at this time are listed. # Sow in seedling boxes for planting out in four to six weeks time. ¹ Best sown in single cell seedling trays as these seedlings don't like their roots being disturbed when transplanted.

What to do in the veggie patch

- Begin harvesting the potatoes once their leaves have died back. If you have butternut pumpkins the first of them should be ready to eat but large pumpkins such as Queensland Blue and Jarrah won't be ready until at least April. These large pumpkins are normally not ready to eat until the first autumn frost.

- As the season winds down there will be lots of ripening tomatoes so make sure you check your tomato plants for ripe tomatoes at least every second day. If blackbirds are eating your tomatoes then pick them as

soon as they get their first flush of light pink colour and bring them in to ripen off inside.



LEFT: Just picked half ripe tomatoes. RIGHT: Tomatoes that have turned completely red after being left in the kitchen to ripen for a few days

- Apply lime or dolomite to any bed that is to be planted with brassicas (Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage), broad beans, peas and spinach. This is because all these vegetables do better in alkali soil. Add one to two handfuls of lime per square metre, double that amount if using dolomite.

- Protect your brassicas from cabbage butterfly caterpillars. The two most effective options are:

Derris dust: A natural insecticide made from the root of the Derris plant. Its main drawback is that it is a

broad spectrum insecticide, which means it will kill helpful predator insects as well as the cabbage butterfly caterpillar.

Bacillus thuringiensis: (commonly sold under the brand name Dipel). The active ingredient is a bacteria that kills any caterpillar that eats leaves sprayed with it. Its big advantage over Derris dust is that it doesn't harm predator insects.



LEFT: Packet of the bio-insecticide Dipel and one of the five sachets it contains. **RIGHT:** Derris dust. Both come in a powdered form but Dipel has to be mixed with water before use.

What to do in the garden

- Make sure you harvest fruit that is ready to be harvested. Apples and pears can be picked when slightly immature but stone fruit such as peaches and nectarines need to be picked when ripe as they won't ripen further once harvested. What you can't eat fresh

should be preserved using a Fowlers Vacola preserving unit or stewed and frozen.

- Move bird netting from fruit trees that have finished their harvest to late fruiting trees with fruit that is yet to be harvested. Prune the fruit trees before putting the nets over.



Espaliered Ballerina apple tree with bird netting over it. INSERT: Close up of the one inch polypipe hoop over the top of the tree, it is there to make it easier to slide the net on and off.

- If you have grapevines then monitor them for ripeness. Remember that grapes are like stone fruit in that they won't ripen further once they are picked, so don't harvest them until they are fully ripe. If you haven't already done so put nets over them. If you only have a few bunches of grapes you can use fruit bags instead.