

# What To Plant And Do In Your Food Garden In February

By John Ditchburn (Ditchy), The Backyard Food Gardener [www.urbanfoodgarden.org](http://www.urbanfoodgarden.org)



WHAT TO PLANT IN FEBRUARY *		
(Ballarat & District)		
FROM SEED	FROM SEEDLING	SEEDLING BOXES #
Beetroot	Broccoli	Broccoli
Fennel	Brussels sprouts	Brussels sprouts
Lettuce	Cabbage	Cabbage
Pak Choi	Cauliflower	Cauliflower
Parsnip	kale	Kale
Radish	Lettuce	Lettuce
Rocket	Pak Choi	Pak Choi <sup>1</sup>
Spinach	Silverbeet	Spring onion
Spring onion	Spring onion	
Turnip		

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

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



**Pruning the tops of tomato shoots to encourage fruit growth.**

## What to do in the veggie patch

- Some of your spring planted crops should have finished by now so clear and manure these beds in preparation for late summer/early autumn plantings. If you are not going to use the beds immediately then cover them with a light layer of mulch.
- Keep training the tomato laterals you want and removing those you don't want. Also cut the tops of any shoot that has grown too high. The ideal place to cut the tops off is just above the highest bunch of developing tomato fruit.
- Regularly check your tomato plants to see if there are any ripe tomatoes to be picked. If birds are eating your

- Check maturing corn cobs to see if they are ready to harvest. Corn cobs are close to maturity when the silks begin to darken. If you are not sure then gently peel back the husk at the top of an ear to see if the cob is ready to eat. Once the first of the corn is ripe you will only have seven to ten days to harvest the crop before the cobs become too hard to eat fresh. What you can't eat fresh should be cut up into cobbettes then par boiled and frozen.
- Begin planting early brassicas (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts). Add lime to your bed before planting as brassicas like a neutral to slightly alkali soil. Apply at the rate of one to two handfuls per square metre.



**LEFT: Corn ear with brown silks. When the silks are brown the corn is ready or nearly ready to pick. RIGHT: Corn that has been cut into cobbettes, par boiled then frozen.**

- As well as harvesting tomatoes and corn pay special attention to zucchinis and beans as they will get away from you in no time if not constantly monitored.

### **What to do in the garden**

- Continue to give your fruit trees a deep water as needed, usually about once a week in dry weather. Apply extra water to trees with fruit approaching maturity.
- 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.

- Place nets over your grapevines or fruit protection bags over each bunch of grapes. Remove the smaller bunches. Reducing the number of grape bunches will produce larger individual grapes in the remaining bunches.



**LEFT: Pruning small bunches of grapes. RIGHT: Larger bunch of grapes covered with a fruit protection bag.**

- Harvest any fruit that are ripe. If you can't eat them immediately then preserve as much as you can and give the rest away. Preserving options include :-

- \* **Apples: Stewed and heat sealed or frozen.**
- \* **Pears: Preserve in a syrup and heat sealed.**