



What To Plant And Do In Your food Garden in April

By John Ditchburn (Ditchy), The Backyard Food Gardener

www.urbanfoodgarden.org



WHAT TO PLANT IN APRIL (Inland cool mountainous) *		
FROM SEED	FROM SEEDLING	IN SEEDLING BOXES #
Broad Beans	Broccoli	<u>Broccoli</u>
Garlic (bulb)	Cabbage	<u>Cauliflower</u>
Lettuce	Cauliflower	<u>Kale</u>
Pak Choi	Kale	<u>Lettuce</u>
Pea	Leek	<u>Onion</u>
Rocket	Lettuce	<u>Pak Choi</u> ¹
Spinach	Pak Choi ¹	<u>Spring onion</u>
Spring onion	Silverbeet	
Turnip	Spring onion	

* 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. Underline Grow in seedling hot box. Red underline Grow in artificially heated seedling hot box.

- Clear summer crop beds and prepare for winter and early spring crops. A basic fertiliser ratio is one shovelful of sheep or cow manure, one shovelful of compost and a couple of handfuls of blood and bone per square metre. You can also add a pinch of rock dust (for trace minerals) and a handful of NKP fertiliser, but if adding NKP then cut back on the animal manure. If you are planting vegetables that prefer alkali soils then add one handful of lime or two of dolomite. Cleared beds that won't be planted out until late winter or early spring should be covered with mulch or planted out with a manure crop.

- Finish planting your over wintering crops such as broccoli, cauliflower, broad beans, peas, spinach. Garlic can be planted anytime from April through to mid-June.

WHAT TO DO IN THE VEGGIE PATCH

- April is when the bulk of the summer crop beds are cleared, which means that you will have a lot of new organic material to compost. Make sure you have space for all this material by clearing the bin with the oldest compost in it (assuming you have a two or three stage compost bin setup). Chop up any course plant material such as corn stalks before adding them.

Try and layer the courser material with finer mulch such as lawn clippings and a bit of manure. Regularly add dolomite, or lime to your compost bins to stop the compost becoming too acidic. It is especially important to do this if you are adding lots of kitchen scraps or animal manure.



Brassicas seedlings that have just been planted in a bed recently cleared of tomato plants. The 13 millimetre polypipe stakes around them are to stop blackbirds scratching up the seedlings.

You can also plant onion seeds in a propagation box ready for planting out in August.

- Harvest the last of the tomatoes and bottle or freeze what you can't eat fresh. Remove your tomato plants after they have stopped growing and turned brown. If you have a lot of green tomatoes left at the end of the season then turn them into green tomato chutney.

WHAT TO DO IN THE GREENHOUSE

- Clear some of the summer greenhouse crops such as eggplant and cucumber and plant with lettuce seedlings, rocket and peas.



Lettuces in the greenhouse, they should be ready to harvest late autumn. As the summer greenhouse crops finish I will be steadily replaced with lettuces, peas and rocket.

- Set aside some space for seedling boxes as from April through to October seedlings are best grown in the shelter of the greenhouse.

WHAT TO DO IN THE GARDEN

- Continue to harvest and bottle fruit from late fruiting trees.

- As the fruit season ends clean and store your nets in a dry well ventilated space in preparation for next year.

- April is a good time to prune your berry bushes:-

Black currants: cut the old dark coloured branches to the ground.

Bramble berries: cut back all canes that have borne fruit this season and tie up the young shoots that haven't borne fruit.

Raspberries: remove every cane that borne fruit last year and dig out any suckers.

- If you are going to plant bare rooted fruit trees this winter then now is the time to order them. Select varieties that will give you a staggered crop over the season. Apples will bear reasonably well without another variety to cross pollinate but pears need another partner, so if planting a single pear consider buying a multi grafted variety.

Though you could risk it and plant a single pear tree in the hope that there are other pear trees in backyards in the immediate area which your pear tree can cross pollinate with.