

Deep Green Permaculture

Vegetable & Herb Gardening Calendar

December – Subtropical Climate, Australia



December is the first month of summer, and with the warmer weather gardens explode into life, becoming lush, abundant and awesome to behold. With the days getting longer as we progress towards the longest day of the year, the summer solstice, there's more time to enjoy the garden and the great outdoors!

During this month of warm sunny days, temperatures can reach extremes, with the threat of bushfires arising during dry, windy periods. Temperatures may exceed 30°C in Brisbane.

Summer thunderstorms may also bring wind, heavy rain and hail in some areas. Sydney and Brisbane average 12 days of rain this month.

During the summer heat, gardens can get quite dry, so keeping up with the watering is important. Pests will also emerge with the warmer weather so keep an eye out for them!

'Chop & Drop' any broad beans or peas after harvesting – chop the tops at ground level, and drop them on top of the soil as mulch, leaving the roots in the ground to return any nitrogen in the root nodules to the soil. Cover with any mulch to keep things looking tidy.

What To Plant	Method	Harvest (weeks)
Amaranth	dst	7-8
Asparagus Pea	d	8-11
Basil	st	10-12
Beans (Climbing)	dst	9-11
Beans (Dwarf, Bush)	dst	7-10
Beetroot	dst	7-10
Burdock	d	17-18
Cape Gooseberry	dst	14-16
Capsicum	st	10-12
Chilli	st	9-11
Chives	dst	7-11
Cucumber	dst	8-10
Eggplant	dst	12-15
French Tarragon	t	30-40 days
Ginger	plant root	25
Lettuce	dst	8-12
Luffa	dst	11-12
Marrow	dst	12-17
Mustard Greens	dst	5-8

Things To Do This Month

- » Top up or add extra mulch around fruit trees and plants to retain soil moisture and reduce water loss from evaporation. Keep mulch away from plant stems and tree trunks to prevent collar rot.
- » Propagate climbers by layering, and propagate strawberries by pegging down runners onto the soil.
- » Propagate plants by taking softwood (green) cuttings from now until January (after which they begin to harden off).
- » Last chance to plant potted fruit trees and vines to beat the summer heat (having roots, they can be planted anytime, but best in spring & autumn). Pick a day when the weather is mild!
- » Continue tying growing vines and brambleberries such as blackberries and their hybrids back to supports or wires.
- » Thin out fruit on plum trees if there is a risk of branches breaking.
- » This is an ideal time to add new fish to ponds or water gardens, as they acclimatise easier in the warmer weather.

Method Key:

- d sow seeds directly into ground
- s sow seeds into seed tray
- ds sow seeds directly into ground or seed tray
- t transplant seedlings into larger pots or plant into ground
- * frost tender
- ** sow after frost

What To Plant	Method	Harvest (weeks)
Okra	dst	11-14
Oregano	dst	6-8
Pumpkin	dst	15-20
Radish	d	5-7
Rockmelon (Cantaloupe)	dst	10-16
Rosella	dst	21-25
Salsify	d	14-21
Silverbeet (Swiss Chard)	dst	7-12
Squash	dst	7-8
Sunflower	dst	10-11
Sweet Corn	dst	11-14
Sweet Potato (Kumara)	plant crowns	15-17
Taro (Cocoyam)	plant tubers	28
Tomatillo	dst	10-14
Tomato	dst	8-17
Turnip	d	6-9
Watermelon	dst	9-14
Zucchini (Courgette, Marrow)	dst	6-9

To help improve these garden calendars, feedback and additional information from readers is greatly appreciated! Australia's climate varies considerably, and local knowledge of when particular things need to be done in the garden are most helpful to others living in that area, so please feel free to share.