

Deep Green Permaculture

Vegetable & Herb Gardening Calendar

December – Temperate 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 Melbourne and Adelaide.

The length of sun increases in the day, with Perth averaging 11 hours of sun a day, Adelaide averaging

more than 9 hours, and other capitals more than 7 hours of sun per day.

The weather can be variable, with Melbourne's sunny days interrupted by gusting north winds and cool cloudy weather.

Summer thunderstorms may bring wind, heavy rain and hail in some areas. Melbourne averages around 12 days of rain this month, while Adelaide averages 6 days, and Perth is much drier, seeing an average of only 4 days of rainfall for the 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.

It may seem unusual, but early summer is also the time to sow some winter brassicas such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower and swedes, so they can be harvested in winter.

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.
- » Last chance to plant tomatoes and capsicum seedlings.
- » 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	t	transplant seedlings into larger pots or plant into ground
s	sow seeds into seed tray	*	frost tender
ds	sow seeds directly into ground or seed tray	**	sow after frost

What To Plant	Method	Harvest (weeks)
Amaranth	dst	7-8
Angelica	t	18 months
Asparagus Pea	d	8-11
Basil	st	10-12
Beans (Climbing)	dst	9-11
Beans (Dwarf, Bush)	dst	7-10
Beetroot	dst	7-10
Borage	dst	8-10
Broccoli	st	10-16
Brussels Sprouts	s	14-28
Burdock	d	17-18
Cabbage	st	8-15
Cape Gooseberry	dst	14-16
Carrot	d	12-18
Cauliflower	st	15-22
Celeriac	st	14-28
Celery	st	17-18
Chicory	st	16-24
Chinese Cabbage	st	8-10
Chives	dst	7-11
Choko	plant tubers	17
Collard Greens	dst	8-11
Coriander (Cilantro)	dst	4-6
Cowpeas (Black Eye Peas)	d	11-14
Cucumber	dst	8-10
Dill	dst	8-12
Eggplant	t	12-15
Endive	dst	10-11
Fennel (Bronze)	dst	14-15
Fennel (Florence)	dst	14-20
French Tarragon	t	30-40 days

continued

What To Plant	Method	Harvest (weeks)
Globe Artichokes	t	42-57
Horseradish	plant crowns	16-24
Jerusalem Artichokes	plant tubers	15-20
Kale	dst	7-9
Kohlrabi	dst	7-10
Leeks	dst	15-18
Lemon Balm	dst	8-10
Lettuce	dst	8-12
Luffa	dst	11-12
Marrow	st	12-17
Mint	dst	8-12
NZ Spinach (Warrigal Greens)	dst	8-10
Okra	t	11-14
Oregano	st	6-8
Parsley	dst	9-19
Pumpkin	t	15-20
Radish	d	5-7
Rockmelon (Cantaloupe)	t	10-16
Salsify	d	14-21
Silverbeet (Swiss Chard)	dst	7-12
Spring Onions (Bunching Onions)	st	6-10
Squash	dst	7-8
Sunflower	t	10-11
Sweet Corn	st	11-14
Sweet Potato (Kumara)	plant crowns	15-17
Tomatillo	dt	10-14
Tomato	t	8-17
Turnip	d	6-9
Watermelon	t	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.

