
GET GROWING

Autumn



What to plant now (Autumn)

April is a great time to be getting out and planting. Veggies to grow now include:

- Beans- broad beans, fava beans- sow seed/plant seedlings
- Beetroot- sow seed
- Brussel sprouts- seedlings
- Cabbage- seedlings
- Carrot- sow seed
- Cauliflower- sow seedlings
- Chives- sow seed
- Endive- sow seed
- Fennel- sow seed/plant seedlings

- Garlic- plant cloves (pointy side up!)
- Kale- sow seeds & start undercover in seed trays/plant seedlings
- Kohlrabi- sow seed
- Leeks- sow seed/plant seedlings
- Onion- sow seeds
- Oregano- sow seeds/plant seedlings
- Pak Choy- sow seeds/plant seedlings
- Parsley- sow seeds/plant seedlings
- Peas- sow seeds/plant seedlings
- Radish- sow seeds
- Rocket- sow seeds
- Silverbeet- sow seeds/plant seedlings
- Snow peas- sow seeds/plant seedlings
- Spinach- sow seeds/plant seedlings
- Turnip- sow seeds



Growing from seed

Saving seed

Autumn is also a great time to be saving seeds from your summer crops. Every time we select seeds we are also determining the strength and quality of future crops, so a good rule of thumb to go by is 'keep the best, eat the rest', this ensures that you're only selecting seed from your strongest, most productive plants.

Where to buy seed

If you're just starting out and don't have the opportunity to save from seed, or maybe you just didn't get round to saving seed this summer, you can also always go visit your local nursery or garden supply centre. In addition, if you're after good quality, heirloom, non-GMO, organic seeds, check out:

- Birdland seeds (Geelong based)
- The Diggers Club
- Eden seeds
- The Little Veggie Patch Co.

Planting

Check the seed packet for when to plant and recommended spacing to work out how many of each plant you'll be able to fit in your bed.

Planting your bed with a variety of different vegetables and flowers is a great way to not only manage pests and diseases but ensure that your plants aren't competing with each other for nutrients.

Position plants that need to be picked regularly at the edge of your beds (e.g. herbs, sprouting broccoli, rocket, lettuce) and those that will be picked less regularly in the middle or towards the back e.g. potatoes, broccoli, carrots, beetroot, cauliflower,

leeks, onion, etc. Position tall plants and those that need trellising e.g. broad beans, climbing peas, at the back, or south side of your bed to avoid shading the smaller, more sun-loving plants.



As a rule of thumb, plant seeds approximately double their width deep, water in well, and keep them moist. If planting in punnets or containers, a great way to get them started is by placing them on a window sill or some other warm spot in your house. As soon as you notice them germinating, make sure that you put them in a position with bright light, and of course, remember to label them. Sowing in punnets first makes it easier to look after seeds and protect them from pests but remember root vegetables like carrots and large-seeded vegetables like beans, are best seeded directly in the ground. Buying seedlings is easier for beginners than growing from seed, although more expensive¹.

Protecting your seedlings

One of the biggest threats to young seedlings is the hungry mouths of slugs and snails. To protect your vulnerable seedlings, you can:

- Go for a walk around your garden at night or after rain and remove them. Doing this over a few days will drastically reduce and minimise damage.
- Protect them with a cloche until they are big enough to survive attack. These can be made from simple recycled materials including soft drink, water, or wine bottles with the bottom cut off (but remember to remove these on warm days!).
- Surround young seedlings with dried, crushed eggshells to act as a barrier. This deters slugs and snails as they don't like the feel of the sharp edges.
- Create your own electric fence. Copper tape reacts with slug and snail slime and imparts a small electric shock. For raised beds, you can staple/nail a strip of copper tape around the top of your bed's frame. An alternate and cheaper option is to use a recycled container such as a plastic pot, remove the base, and secure copper tape around its rim and then place this over your seedling. An added bonus of this method is that it also prevents birds from digging up your young plants.



Copper tape around an old pot with the bottom cut off

¹ Kate Lavers- The Plummery

Another major pest this time of year is the white cabbage moth. Methods to control the moth include:

- Using fine netting to keep the moths from laying eggs on the plants. You will need to put the netting over as soon as you plant the seedlings. If you wait until there are signs of caterpillar damage, it is too late, as you just trap the emerging moths inside the netting.
- Egg hunting. Look for the tiny yellow football-sized shaped eggs on the underside of your leaves and simply rub them off.
- Companion plant with cress. The moths seem to be attracted to laying their eggs on the cress rather than your plants and the caterpillars that emerge find it delightful, only to drop dead after feeding on it, as it acts as a natural poison.
- Use the dipel, a natural bacterial spray that is toxic to caterpillars, but safe for other creatures (you can buy this from most nurseries or garden supplies).



Harvesting

For most vegetables, it usually takes between 8-12 weeks before they are ready to harvest. For some quick wins, you can grow rocket, lettuce, spinach, mustard greens, radish, spinach, turnips, and other greens. Another benefit is that most of these varieties can be planted all year round. In addition, leafy vegetables like kale and silverbeet can be harvested continually by picking the outside leaves, so you don't need to remove the whole plant (if doing this, however, ensure that you leave some large leaves in order for the plant to still be able to grow).

Growing from cuttings

Many woody herbs are propagated from cuttings. This is most easily done by pruning small sections of the herb in winter or spring. Simply cut a piece from the adult plant about 5-10cm, strip all leaves except a few at the top, and insert into moist soil/potting mix or straight into your garden bed. Ensure that you keep your cuttings moist and within a week or two, they should have developed roots. Some herbs that can be grown from cuttings include bay, rosemary, lavender, thyme, lemon verbena, and mint².

Recommended reading and useful resources:

The seed savers handbook- Michael and Jude Fanton
The Permaculture Home Garden- Linda Woodrow
The Urban Farmer- Justin Calverley
Gardenate website and app- [gardenate.com](https://www.gardenate.com)
Website- <https://www.katlavers.com/>

² Kat Lavers- The Plummary

