

Gardening



Prepping your patch for Autumn planting!

Q&A

Q: When do you know it's the right time to dig up potatoes? (They are self-seeded and so their planting was unplanned and the time unknown!)
– Valerie, Castlemaine

A: Generally, after the first heavy frost and once all the tops have died down. You will also know as the skins have firmed up a little and will be less prone to ripping.

Q: Is there anything that can be sprayed on foliage to deter possums?
– Colin, Harcourt

A: Possums are extremely clever. We have had some issues with our lovely big mummy Possum Rosie at ASQ Skydancers eating our citrus trees over winter. I've heard of lots of remedies such as spreading blood and bone around your plants or making a chilli spray and spraying it on your plants' foliage. I've found that using a fine fruit fly netting over your veggie beds or fruit trees is the most effective and safe way to keep your possums out of your patch.

Q: Are there any winter vegetables to grow that frost really won't harm?
– Matty, Chewton

A: Absolutely! Generally, these plants will just grow slower through the really frosty months but the frost will not burn them. Try cabbages, cauliflowers, broccoli, beetroot, spinach, radishes and silverbeet.

Q: What is the best product to use on garden beds to keep the soil manageable and not like rock a few inches below the surface?
– Liz, Castlemaine

A: It all depends on what you want out of the garden bed to what you should add. In a berry patch you'll be wanting to add lots of compost and manure, then mulch really well to keep the moisture in the soil. Whereas if your growing proteas you'll be wanting to break up any heavy clay soil by adding plenty of gypsum, coarse washed sand (for drainage) and well-aged compost. The key thing is improving the structure of our typically heavy clay soils is plenty of gypsum and heaps of organic matter, compost and manure. Mulching is also a great way to build up the soil as when it rots down it will slowly build up the nutrients in the soil.

- Elisabeth Templeton,
ASQ Skydancers

After the dry summer heat, Autumn is the time to rejuvenate your garden and get excited for our beautiful winter rains! It's honestly the best time of year to plant up your garden as it gives the plants a good six months to settle in before we get hit with the hot summer season again. Before you get too excited, it's time to do the hard work and get your soil ready. Soil is so important, it's what is going to hold the water in summer, feed your garden, and it's going to either make your plants succeed or fail. You can do one of two things when it comes to soil: Improve the soil you have or bring soil in new soil. Most people in our area will have heavy clay soils. You can improve these soils with a bit of hard work by adding gypsum and compost to break up the structure.

After composting your soil, you can add mulch on top of your garden beds as it retains moisture and regulates soil temperature. Bark mulches are great for native plants as they break down over time giving nutrients to the soil. When applying bark and mulch, we recommend a thickness of 50mm.

Autumn is an opportune time to feed the whole garden. Growbetter's Organic Fertiliser is a great all-rounder fertiliser that has a slow and gentle action that won't burn your plant's roots.

Take the opportunity to do some pruning to get your plants back into shape after the summer growth period!

Vegies to sow

Vegies that can be planted now include broad beans, beetroot, brussel sprouts, carrot, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, parsley, shallots, silverbeet, spinach and turnips.

Flowers to plant

You can create a gorgeous spring display in your garden by planting now. It's time to plant your spring flowering bulbs such as daffodils, freesias, tulips, ranunculi, jonquils and hyacinths. All in stock now and ready to grow!

Put the work into your soil now to ensure you reap the benefits.



Get planting to enjoy your very own fresh parsley straight from the garden.



It's time to plant your spring flowering bulbs such as Daffodils.

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