



how to grow summer vegetables

During the summer months there is a wonderful array of vegetables you can easily grow at home; from lettuces and salad greens, to tomatoes, beans, capsicum and cucumbers. No matter how big or small your available space; you can successfully grow vegetables in regular garden beds, raised beds or in pots and containers.

Regional Tips and Choosing the Right Variety

What vegetables you plant and when will depend on the area you live in. Always check that the variety you purchase is suited to your climate. Plan to start planting outdoors once the soil has warmed up, for most of the country this is around Labour Weekend (late October). You can sow the seeds of your summer vegetables in trays indoors then plant them out in the garden once they have become seedlings, (look out for the Daltons Growing from Seed Guide) or buy the seedlings you want from your local garden centre and plant them directly into the garden.

Below are some examples of popular summer vegetables you can grow in your garden. Follow the guide for best planting times.

VEGETABLE	PLANTING AND HARVESTING (Warmer climates)	PLANTING AND HARVESTING (Cooler climates)
Beans	Planting: October through to March. Harvesting: Harvest throughout summer (use succession planting for continuous supply).	Planting: November onwards. Harvesting: Harvest throughout summer (use succession planting for continuous supply).
Capsicum	Planting: Sow in seed trays from September and plant out in garden from late October onwards. Harvesting: Throughout summer.	Planting: Sow in seed trays from October and plant out in garden from late November onwards. Harvesting: Harvest throughout summer.
Carrots	Planting: Direct sow anytime of the year. Harvesting: Throughout the year.	Planting: Direct sow anytime of the year. Harvesting: Throughout the year.

Courgettes	Planting: Sow in seed trays from September and plant out in garden from October. Harvesting: Throughout summer/ into autumn.	Planting: Sow in seed trays from late September and plant out in garden from late October, early November. Harvesting: Throughout summer/ into autumn.
Cucumber	Planting: Sow in seed trays from September and plant out from late October. Harvesting: Throughout summer.	Planting: Sow in seed trays from late September and plant out from late October, early November. Harvesting: Throughout summer.
Eggplants/ aubergine	Planting: Plant out from November. Harvesting: February onwards.	Planting: Plant out from November. Harvesting: February onwards.
Lettuce/salad greens	Planting: Sow any time of year. Harvesting: Within 6-8 weeks (use succession planting for continuous supply).	Planting: Sow any time of year. Harvesting: Within 6-8 weeks (use succession planting for continuous supply).
Tomatoes	Planting: Grow in seed trays in September, plant out in garden mid – late October. Harvesting: Throughout summer.	Planting: Grow in seed trays in late September early October, plant out in garden early November. Harvesting: Throughout summer.
Onions	Planting: Direct sow anytime of the year. Harvesting: Throughout the year.	Planting: Direct sow anytime of the year. Harvesting: Throughout the year.
Peas	Planting: Direct sow anytime of the year. Harvesting: Throughout the year. Preferably winter but can be grown all year around.	Planting: Direct sow anytime of the year. Harvesting: Throughout the year. Preferably winter but can be grown all year around.
Potato	Planting: All year round. Harvesting: 4-5 months from planting.	Planting: All year round. Harvesting: 4-5 months from planting.

Radish	Planting: Direct sow into garden from early October onwards. Harvesting: 4-5 weeks after sowing (use succession planting for continuous supply).	Planting: Direct sow into garden in late October/early November. Harvesting: 4-5 weeks after sowing (use succession planting for continuous supply).
NZ Spinach	Planting: Direct sow anytime of the year. Harvesting: Throughout the year.	Planting: Direct sow anytime of the year. Harvesting: Throughout the year.
Spring onions (Scallions)	Planting: Direct sow late October. Harvesting: Right throughout summer (succession planting essential).	Planting: Direct sow late October. Harvesting: Right throughout summer (succession planting essential).
Sweetcorn	Planting: Direct sow into garden in mid to late October. Harvesting: 8 weeks later.	Planting: Direct sow into garden in late October early November. Harvesting: 8 weeks later.

Planting

Initial preparation is critical to the success of any garden big or small. If you are planning your first garden, choose a site that is north facing that is not too windy or exposed, and ideally soil should be deep, loose, crumbly, free draining and nutrient rich. To prepare your soil for planting dig in lots of organic matter such as **Daltons Enriched Compost** or **Garden Time™ Vegetable Mix** which improves the soil quality and helps plants to develop strong healthy root systems. For best results do this about 1-2 weeks before planting to allow the soil to aerate.

When planning the planting positions of vegetables in your garden, allow enough room between plants to promote good air flow – this is particularly important in summer and for tasks such as weeding, staking plants, and lateral removal in tomatoes etc.

For plants that require staking put your support stakes or structures in place before you plant your young plants so you do not disturb the plants root system later on. A good trick is to recycle old pantyhose and use them to tie plants to support structures.

Pests and Diseases

Powdery Mildew is a common fungal disease that is more prevalent in humid conditions, and typically strikes during the late summer months. The disease affects courgettes and other vegetables such as beans, pumpkin and cucumbers etc, and any plants in the affected area. If it does show up in your garden, it's important to remove any signs of the disease immediately and destroy it hygienically eg burn or put in rubbish bin (be sure to keep it out of your compost bin). You can help prevent Powdery Mildew with regular applications of a copper compound spray. Do this when the plant is just about to mature and before the powdery mildew has arrived.

Slugs and snails are a major problem in spring and summer and can devour young seedlings overnight. Protect them with non-toxic pet and child friendly slug/snail pellets, or try organic alternatives such as beer traps, or surrounding plants with crushed shell, bark or saw dust.

To help keep insect pests at bay plant calendulas and marigolds as they have a strong pungent odour to help deter pests.

If you are unsure what is attacking your plants, eg holes in leaves etc, inspect your plants after dark with a torch and all will be revealed. Once you know what the culprit is you can then take the necessary steps to treat them.

Garden Maintenance

With any garden, and in particular vegetable, try to have good garden hygiene, such as cleaning up any dead leaves or foliage, and regular weeding.

Feeding and Watering

Apply a side dressing of **Daltons Garden Time™ Vegetable Fertiliser** to your vegetable garden approximately every 4-6 weeks during summer, depending on the vegetable crops you have growing in your garden and how often you are watering (some crops are heavy feeders and may require more applications). Always ensure that your applied fertiliser is watered in well.

During the height of summer (mid-late January to early February), watering becomes the critical factor so water plants adequately and remember to mulch with plenty of **Daltons Mulch & Grow** to help retain soil moisture. Going to seed or 'bolting' can happen easily in summer and is caused when the plant has been stunted or stressed during the growing period and can be caused by lack of or inconsistent watering. Regular consistent watering is the key, and always increase watering during any periods of drought.

Growing Vegetables in Pots

You can successfully grow vegetables in pots or containers, especially with the many dwarf or mini-varieties now available. Lettuce varieties to try are 'Tom Thumb', 'Little Gem' and other red leaf varieties which grow well and look great. You can also grow dwarf tomatoes such as Roma, and Cherry Tomatoes, as well as capsicum, cucumber, courgettes and many more. Growing in pots is perfect for those with limited space however there are a couple of things you need to do:

- Container size is important – be sure the container is big enough. Use a good quality potting or container mix such as **Daltons Premium Potting Mix**, or **Premium Tub Mix** as they have been specially developed for pots have moisture retaining qualities, and deliver well balanced, controlled release nutrients. It's a good idea to change the soil every time you want to grow a new crop as it can get depleted. Alternatively revive old soil with **Daltons Goldcote Vegetable & Herb Fert** or **Garden Time™ Vegetable Fertiliser**.
- Position your pots or containers in a sunny, north facing position, away from strong winds, and water regularly.
- Being in a confined space potted vegetables deplete the soil more quickly of nutrients, so feed them on regularly with a Daltons Vegetable Fertiliser – approximately every 2-3 weeks.
- Planting summer vegetables usually occurs around Labour Weekend, but you can plant into pots earlier, just ensure you move them to a sheltered spot to avoid a late frost.

Gardening Terms Explained

Side dressing – Means to apply fertiliser to the soil on or around the sides of the plant.

Succession planting – Where you stagger your plantings or planting varieties so you do not have them all cropping at once, eg plant a couple of lettuce every 2-3 weeks.

Mulching – A top layer of organic matter such as wood chip or pea straw keeps moisture in during summer months, keeps soil warm during colder months.

Bolting – Stress impacts a plant causing it to speed through its life cycle. This means the plant uses up all its energy and 'bolts' to flower/seed, and will not produce a crop.



Products to try

Garden Time™ Vegetable Mix | Garden Time™ Vegetable Fertiliser
 Premium Rose & Flower Fertiliser | Premium Potting Mix
 Premium Garden Mix | Enriched Compost
 Goldcote Vegetable & Herb Fert | Nutrient Enriched Mulch & Grow