

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES - WHAT TO DO AND WHEN

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Build	Raised beds				Wigwams using bamboo canes or hazel poles, sow climbing beans at the base							
Dig	Compost or well rotted manure into veg plots to improve soil stucture and fertility	Rake beds over to level soil, breakdown clumps and remove stones	Hoe regularly to prevent weeds growing								Clear away any remaining crops. Fork over any bare patches of soil	Dig all veg beds and fork manure in
Cover		Rhubarb with forcing jars or buckets to get early crops	Beds with cloches or fleece to warm the soil for early sowings outdoors	Fruit blossom with fleece to protect against night frosts	Soft fruit with netting to protect from birds		Brassicas with fine netting to keep cabbage white butterfly and other pests			Tender herbs and crops with fleece or cloches if frost is forecast	Mulch borders with well rotted manure	Any remaining crops that are not overwintering with fleece or cloches
Feed		Fruit with sulphate of potash to boost flowering and fruiting	Brassicas with pelleted chicken manure				Tomatoes and other crops regularly					
Harvest		Overwintering brassicas such as Purple Sprouting, Winter cauliflowers and Parsnips	Rhubarb - pull away from the base.		Asparagus - cut at ground level taking care not to damage the crown	Early sugarsnap peas and broad beans.	Early potatoes, tomatoes under cover. Watch for ripening soft and cane fruit.	Tomatoes outdoors. Lift onions, shallots, potatoes, sweetcorn as they are ready. Similary early apples	Blackberries, autumn raspberries as they ripen. Sweetcorn	Apples - keep what can be stored in trays but check for rots regularly. Outdoor tomatoes before any frosts. Also harvest any remaining marrows, onions, pumkins, potatoes.		
Plant	New fruit trees and bushes		Asparagus crowns, artichokes, strawberry runners. Plant out onion and shallots sets, also early potatoes	Maincop potatoes		Tender crops from under cover - chillies, courgettes, tomatoes, sweetcorn and pumpkins.	Leeks, cabbage and other brassica seedlings	Rooted strawberry runners - pin runners to the ground to encourage rooting and then cut from Mother plant	Autumn onion sets	Pot any herbs for use during the winter and store inside.	Plant cane fruit	Take hardwood cuttings from currants and gooseberries. Plant bare root fruit trees and bushes
Prune, pinch and trim	Apples and pears to limit size and shape No more than 30% of existing size				Pinch out the tips of broad beans to prevent blackfly	Pinch out the side shoots on cordon tomatoes	Prune stone fruit and trained apples and pears. Thin out any congested fruit on trees	Prune apple, pears and other fruit trees according to variety	Trim maincrop strawberries of unwanted foliage and runners	Cut Autumn rasperry canes to just above soil level. Asparagus fronds to be cut at soil level		Prune apple and pear trees to enourage new growth. Similarly blackcurrants
Order/buy	Veg seeds, onion and shallot sets, seed potatoes, asparagus	Seed potatoes	Vegetable plants by mail order									Seed catalogues

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Sow	Onions, chillies and sprouting seeds	Cauliflower, leeks, lettuces and salad leaves, onions, chillies and spring cabbage	Cucumber, peppers and tomato seeds indoors	Outdoors: broad beans, carrots, beetroot, peas, spinach, etc. Under cover: tender crops	Pots of herbs. Outdoors in shallow drills: cabbages, peas, salads, spinach, etc	Keep making successional sowings of salad crops, sugarsnap peas, pak choi, spinach	Beans, chard, lettuce, radish, spinach, swede, etc	Chard, lettuce, radish, spring cabbage, winter spinach, etc	Cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, winter spinach, etc.	Broad beans and hardy peas	Garlic cloves in modules, plant outside when well rooted. Sow broad beans outside if mild	
Water						Strawberries to boost cropping	All crops regularly during dry weather. This is best done early morning or evening to avoid scorching and ensure maximum plant uptake	All crops regularly during dry weather. This is best done early morning or evening to avoid scorching and ensure maximum plant uptake				
Notes:		Bring potted strawberries into the greenhouse or cover with cloches to get earlier crops		Straw underneath developing strawberries to raise them from the soil. Tie in new shoots on cane fruit	Earth up emerging potato shoots to stop light getting to the new potatoes.	Continue tying in cane fruit shoots. Thin out overcrowded seedlings. Watch out for blight on tomatoes and potatoes.		Cut down potato tops if blight strikes	Raise marrows and squashes to ripen	Save any seeds from overmature beans, peas, etc. Store in the dry	Store hosepipes and other equipment indoors for the winter. Turn off and drain any outside taps or insulate.	Check any stored crops for rot.
					Use pheromone traps around fruit trees to catch moths	Consider planting annuals amongst veg to attract hoverflies and companion planting to deter pests				Look out for bargain buckets of seeds in plant centres - huge discounts can be found and, if stored correctly, seeds will be viable next year.		

These are general tips and guidelines but many crops will have a range of varieties for many different purposes, for example potatoes are categorised as first earlies, mid season and late crop but also into salad, new, bakers, general purpose and some will store better than others. Decide what is most useful for you according to your soil and needs. Most seed packets will have suggested sowing, transplanting and harvesting dates. Consider sequential sowings of things like lettuce and spinach to avoid a glut and keep cropping throughout the season - just a pinch of seeds at a time will keep you supplied.

Other useful links are:

- RHS website <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/beginners-guide>
- Sarah Raven D <https://www.sarahraven.com/advice>
- T Brown & Co https://www.dtbrownseeds.co.uk/Home_2/growingrecord/

Free download to plan your growing season and record what you planted where and when to ensure a good rotation