

SUMMER GROWING TIPS

SUMMER TIP – 1



If you fancy trying something a bit different in August, sowing salad rocket and parsley is a good idea. If sown in pots it can be brought into the greenhouse as winter marches on, and you can continue to crop. If you are feeling a little lazy but use lots of summer herbs all year round – try buying live herbs from the supermarket (parsley, basil, coriander) and replant in troughs filled with compost. As you transplant tease out the stems and these will grow into larger plants in the bigger trough. You will need about three live supermarket plants per trough to make sure you have loads of fresh herbs to keep cropping and using in the kitchen.

SUMMER – JUNE, JULY, AUGUST



JUNE is one of the busiest months of the year in both the garden and on the allotment. Whilst everything is taking advantage of the warmer weather, the plants are growing – but so are the weeds ! June signifies the commencement of the battle against the weeds – and the more you get on top of them now, the easier it will be over the remainder of the growing season. Weeds will compete for moisture, light and space and ‘hog it all’, to the detriment of your carefully sown and planted younger more tender crops. So – here’s our top weeding tips.....if you don’t want to resort to chemical weedkillers.

- Hoe regularly to reduce young weeds whilst the roots are shallow. Hoe when its dry so that the cut weeds will die back quickly. If the soil is damp – collect the severed weeds up so that they don't re-grow.
- Don't let weeds flower – by doing so they will regenerate and provide a new crop of weeds. Don't put any perennial weeds on the compost as they can live to fight another day. Put them on the bonfire, garden bin or green recycling centre.
- Try using lightproof membranes to reduce weed growth and spread surface mulch to suppress weed growth – this is a good technique around the base of fruit bushes and raspberry canes.

JUNE and JULY are good months for experimenting with sweet potatoes and edible flowers – including chicory, rocket, dill, oregano and borage. Do research though as some – potato, pepper and tomato – are actually poisonous.

As JUNE moves into JULY the emphasis is still on weeding, watering and mulching in an effort to give your crops the optimum growing conditions. July is also a good time to do some summer pruning, particularly of fruit trees and bushes, just after they finish cropping – cherries, currants, summer raspberries, gooseberries.

Watering effectively with a good soaking rather than a meagre sprinkling is best – even if it is done less often, it gets down to the roots where the plants can make more use of it. Best done at the start or end of the day – rather than in the height of the sun. If you have a large area to water try doing some in the morning and some later in the evening, so that it doesn't become so much of a chore and given a good soaking most things only really need watering every few days.

Summer herbs are in abundance in JULY, and it is also a good time to start drying and storing them. Marjoram, thyme and mint are all good stored in jars once dried in the summer sun.

By the time AUGUST is on its way, onions, garlic and shallots should all be ready for harvesting this month and it is a good idea to loosen the soil around the roots before lifting. Once lifted lay them on the ground or on upside down meshed containers to let the air circulate and dry them off for storing. Storing onions and shallots can be a problem if you don't have much space in a cool dry shed – but empty hanging baskets is a really good space saving way to store. Just put a couple of hooks into the roof timber of your shed or garage and hang the baskets of onions. They are easy to get to throughout the winter, but do remember to check over every now and again and remove any that have gone soft or sprouted.

This is also a good time to sow some crops that will survive winter and be available for early next year. For example spinach, chard, leeks, spring cabbage, kale and broad beans are all ok to go into the ground now and be ready for mid April next year – just remember to mark out where you put them and not accidentally dig them over in late winter/early spring ! There are some lovely colourful varieties of chard and kale which are not only great for cooking with, but also very ornamental in the flower beds as well.

