

What To Plant And Do In the Food Garden In January

By John Ditchburn (Ditchy), The Backyard Food Gardener www.urbanfoodgarden.org

WHAT TO PLANT IN JANUARY (Cool mountainous) *		
FROM SEED	FROM SEEDLING	IN SEEDLING BOXES #
BEANS - BUSH	BASIL	BROCCOLI ^X
BEANS - RUNNER	BROCCOLI ^X	BRUSSELS SPROUTS ^X
BEETROOT	CABBAGE ^X	CABBAGE ^X
CARROT	CORN ¹	CAULIFLOWER ^X
CORN ^E	LETTUCE	LEEK
PAK CHOI	PAK CHOI	LETTUCE
PARSNIP	LEEK	PAK CHOI
ROCKET	SILVERBEET	SILVERBEET
SILVERBEET		
SPRING ONION		
ROCKET		

* Key vegetables only, not all vegetables that can be planted at this time are listed. # Sow in seedling boxes for planting out in four to six weeks time. 1 Best sown in single cell seedling trays as these seedlings don't like their roots being disturbed when transplanted. X Prone to cabbage butterfly damage when grown this time of year. (Parenthesis) Grow in greenhouse or temporary polytunnel. DOUBLE UNDERLINED Grow in glass/plastic covered seedling box. RED DOUBLE UNDERLINED

WHAT TO DO IN THE VEGGIE PATCH

Most efforts in the vegetable garden should be directed towards harvesting what you have already planted though continue to plant quick turnover and staggered planting vegetables such as rocket and lettuce. You can also start planting your early autumn brassicas crops (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower) in seedling boxes for planting out as seedlings in February.

- **Continue planting lettuces every two or three weeks to ensure a steady supply of young lettuces.**

In the warmer weather lettuces should be grown in the shade or under 50% shadecloth as this reduces the likelihood of the plants bolting, they will also remain sweeter for longer, mature lettuces have a tendency to become bitter in warmer weather.

An alternative is to thickly plant a large pot with lettuce seeds and pick the lettuces as mature seedlings. When the lettuces in the first pot are at the early seedling stage plant another pot to ensure continuity. While this method is not suitable for heading lettuces it is the best way to get sweet picking lettuce leaves in summer.

- **Start planting seedling boxes with the first of the autumn season brassicas plants.**

This is especially important for Brussels sprouts as they need to be planted in the ground as seedlings by mid March at the latest.



Pot with mature lettuce seedlings. When harvested at this stage the lettuces will be sweet even in the hottest weather.

- **Keep on top of harvesting and processing harvested produce.**

January sees summer vegetable production move into top gear so regularly check your vegetable patch to make sure that you harvest what is ready to be harvested.

- **Process vegetables that can't be eaten immediately.**

TOMATOES: Peeled or pulped and preserved using the Fowlers Vacola method.

BEANS: Blanched then frozen.

CORN: Cut into cobbettes then blanched and frozen.

ZUCCHINIS AND CUCUMBERS: Pickled.

To blanch vegetables heat a pot of water until it is boiling vigorously, add the vegetables and put the lid on. As soon as the pot has begun to boil again empty the vegetables into a colander and run cold water over it to quickly cool down the contents. As soon as the vegetables have reached room temperature place them into freezer bags and freeze.

- **Continue to thin out and tie up shoots on your tomato plants.**

If birds are eating your ripe tomatoes then pick them as soon as they show the first pink flush of ripening and bring them inside to ripen off in the safety of the kitchen.

- **Keep up a regular watering schedule.**

Ideally this should be done in the morning so that the leaves and surface soil is dry by the end of the day. Watering late in the day creates the moist conditions that attract snails and slugs.

- **Continue to apply mulch to all beds except those recently sown with small seeded vegetables such as carrots.**

- **Apply regular doses of liquid fertiliser to capsicum, eggplant and celery.**

All vegetable plants will benefit from dose of liquid fertiliser but these are high nutrient demand vegetables so they will do much better if given a regular dose of fertiliser. Also apply liquid fertiliser to any newly planted seedlings.

- **Stake and tie up eggplant, chilli and capsicum plants.**

These plants should be staked and tied as the weight of their fruit may cause stems to break.

- **Lift your onions when the leaves lie over on their sides and the roots begin to lose their grip on the soil.**

To store the onions hang a loop of cord or twine up in a dry place with good ventilation. Take the first onion and loop the top twice through the twine. After the first onion has been hung later onions only have to be looped around the twine once as the bottom onions support the ones being placed on top.

It is important that the onion leaves are not too shrivelled otherwise they will break. Ideally the leaves should have started to wilt but still have some green in them.



LEFT: Onions ready to be harvested. RIGHT: Onions strung up on a loop of bailing twine.

WHAT TO DO IN THE GREENHOUSE

- **Monitor for white fly and aphid infestations and spray repeatedly with pyrethrum spray if discovered.**

- **Check plants for signs of disease.**

Plants grown in greenhouses are more susceptible to disease due to the humid conditions greenhouses create so it is important to be very vigilant. If an entire plant is diseased then remove it and do not plant that type of plant in the same place next year. If you strike major disease problems then plant your vegetables in large pots, replacing the pots each year with sterile pots filled with new soil and/or potting mix.

- **Continue to tie eggplant, chilli and capsicum plants at higher points up the stakes as the plants grow larger.**

- **On very hot days spray the plants with water or run mist sprayers.**

Also keep doors and windows open day and night throughout the summer. If you are in a particularly hot area you may need to put shade cloth over the greenhouse.

WHAT TO DO IN THE GARDEN

- **Give your fruit trees a regular deep watering.**

The best place to apply water to trees is at the drip line, which is the edge of the foliage.

- **Spray apple trees with white oil to control codling moth.**

One part white oil to fifty parts water sprayed on all parts of the canopy.

- **Control cherry slugs on cherry, and pear and trees.**

They can be controlled with lime or derris dust sprinkled over the leaves or sprayed with Pyrethrum mixed with a bit of Clensel.

- **Net fruit trees approaching harvest time and harvest the fruit when ripe.**

Give the trees a light prune before placing the nets on. This is to reduce the likelihood of shoots growing through the nets. Remove the nets as soon as the last of the fruit has been picked.



Netted Ballerina apple tree. The tree was pruned just prior to having the net put over it.

© John Ditchburn urbanfoodgarden.org 20180101