



Spring into Spring!

Spring is now officially here. Not sure about you, but it feels like it has been a very long winter. If you haven't started preparing your soils for the spring planting season, it's not too late. Soil temperatures are still too low in the Hills for planting most spring vegetables. By the end of September things should have improved.

There are many reasons to not dive in too quickly, including:

- there is still a chance that late frosts will damage new seedlings, frosts may still pose a risk until well into October,
- if the soil is too cold, seedlings planted too soon will sit in the ground and not progress, if they start off struggling, they very rarely improve,
- seedlings stressed by cold soil temperatures, become prone to pests and disease.

Heritage vegetables

If you're really keen to get started on the spring garden, try germinating your own seedlings. If you are interested in growing something a little out of the ordinary, try sourcing heritage varieties. Heritage varieties are generally older vegetable varieties which have been phased out commercially because they may be less productive, have a shorter shelf life, they may be softer skinned and not conducive to long storage and transport like many of the more commonly available varieties. As a result of their perceived 'softer' traits, heritage varieties have been phased out commercially.

One of the main advantages of growing heritage varieties is that they taste a whole lot better than commercial varieties. Often heritage varieties come in different shapes and colours making them fun for kids to grow and eat.

If you are interested in purchasing heritage seed varieties check out the mail order seed companies such as Diggers, or Eden Seeds.

Groovy Garden Beds

If you haven't already seen our "Groovy Garden Beds", these are a range of garden beds in bright colours, they come in a range of sizes and colours. They are a great addition to brighten up any garden. Contact us for an individual quote.

Some things to plant in September:

- Amaranth
- Artichokes
- Asian Greens, (Bok choy, pak choy)
- Beetroot
- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Chevril
- Coriander
- Cresses
- Kohlrabi
- Lettuce and other salad greens
- Mint
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Radish
- Rocket
- Rosemary
- Silverbeet
- Spring onion
- Strawberries
- Thyme

NB: this list is only an indication of some of the things that can be planted during August, there are many others, depending on where you are in SA.



Want to know more, or book an appointment?

Contact Veg2Table at:

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How to Grow: Carrots

Carrots are a fun vegetable to grow. Kids love the surprise of pulling the carrot straight from the ground and after a quick wash; they can be eaten straight away!!... But many people have problems with getting carrots to this stage. In this section I hope to give you a few hints and tips to successful carrots.

Varieties: Carrots originate from Pakistan and Afghanistan. The original varieties were orange with purple coloured tops. The Dutch were responsible for developing the all orange carrot we see commonly today. Varieties available today include the orange, St Valery, All seasons, and Baby Carrots. The original carrot varieties are becoming more commonly available too, look out for Purple Dragon one of the original Afghan varieties.

Soil Preparation: Successful carrots need a good friable free draining soil, if the soil is rocky or hard, the carrot may struggle and produce odd shaped roots as they try and push their way through the soil. If the soil has been recently fertilised, the carrot roots may become fork shaped, and will produce more top leaf growth at the expense of root development. Carrots are best grown following leafy crops. If soils are deep and sandy choose longer length varieties, or shorter quicker growing varieties for heavier clay soils.

Sowing the seed: Carrots are best grown from seed, punnet grown carrots often suffer from transplant shock as a result of root disturbance, resulting in poorly growing/stunted carrots. Seed can be mixed with a little sand to make for more even sowing. Another option is to mix seed with larger radish seed. The radishes will grow quicker and be ready for harvest sooner than the carrots. When the radishes are harvested, the remaining carrots will be more evenly spaced, reducing the need for thinning later. Sow seeds in shallow trenches and cover lightly with sand or soil with few clumps. The seed needs to be kept damp to enable even germination, so mulch lightly with a layer of lawn clippings or chopped pea straw, check the planting daily and water when necessary.

Management: Thin seedlings to approximately 5cm apart to reduce competition from overcrowding. Successive plantings can be made every three or so weeks to guarantee a continuous harvest.

Harvesting: As the carrots grow and mature, the tops will start to push out of the ground slightly, if the carrots look big enough for eating they can be harvested.

Companions: Carrots grow well with lettuce, peas, leeks, chives, onion, cucumber, beans, tomato, sage and rosemary.

World Carrot Museum

.....Well who would have thought.... there is a world carrot museum, check out www.carrotmuseum.com for everything you have always wanted to know about carrots, including carrot jokes, such as:

Q: What do you call an elephant with a carrot in each ear?

A: Anything you want as he can't hear you!

Hmmmmm!