



Crop Rotations:

.... for disease control

When you are planning your vegetable garden this year, make sure you remember to rotate your crops. Certain plants are particularly good at carrying disease over from one season to the next. Tomatoes are a classic example of this. Many of the common tomato diseases will live in the soil over winter, only to re-emerge in spring, if they are given the right opportunity. To reduce disease carryover, avoid planting the same plant family in the same position as last year. Some familiar plant families include:

Nightshade	Brassica	Legume	Cucurbit
Tomato	Broccoli	Peas	Cucumber
Potato	Cabbage	Beans	Zucchini
Eggplant	Cauliflower		Pumpkin
Capsicum	Pak Choy		Watermelon
Chilli	Turnip		Rockmelon

Other plant families are root crops, alliums (onion and garlic) and leafy vegetables.

The simplest way to avoid issues with crop disease is to avoid planting the above families in the same position for at least 2 years, 3 years is even better.

Crop rotation is also important tool in soil nutrient management. This topic will be discussed in future newsletters.

Worm Farm

If you have a worm farm, check their positioning in the garden. They may have been fine during winter when the sun sits lower in the sky, now that spring is here and with summer just round the corner, make sure they are out of direct sunlight – otherwise they might cook!

Coming events

There are a couple of events coming up in November which we will be attending. On Saturday the 12th of November, from 12 noon to 4pm, is the **Mawson Lakes Garden Expo**, and the **Hills Garden and Environmental Expo** will be held on Sunday 13th of November from 10am to 4pm at Uraidla. If you happen to see us at either event, pop in and say hello.

Some things to plant in October:

- 🍅 Artichokes
- 🍅 Asian Greens, (Bok choy, pak choy)
- 🍅 Basil
- 🍅 Beans (climbing) and peas
- 🍅 Beetroot
- 🍅 Carrots
- 🍅 Celery
- 🍅 Chives
- 🍅 Coriander (last chance)
- 🍅 Dill
- 🍅 Eggplant
- 🍅 Kohlrabi
- 🍅 Leek
- 🍅 Lettuce and other salad greens
- 🍅 Oregano
- 🍅 Parsley
- 🍅 Rocket
- 🍅 Silverbeet
- 🍅 Spring onion
- 🍅 Strawberries
- 🍅 Tomato
- 🍅 Zucchini

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?

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How to Grow: Tomatoes

For many home gardeners, tomatoes are the most prized of all crops! They are a highly versatile fruit that are great fresh, but can also be used year round if preserved, dried, or frozen into paste.

Varieties: Tomatoes originated from South America, but had reached Europe by the 16th century. There are many varieties available to growers today. Some of the commonly available seedlings seen in garden centres include, Grosse Lisse, Apollo, Mighty Red, Roma and a variety of cherry tomato. If you want something a little different, look out for Heirloom varieties such as Black Krim, Black Russian, Green zebra, Tigerella and cherry tomatoes; Lemon drop and Cherry Roma.

Soil Preparation: Prepare a new tomato bed every year, in an open, sunny position. Tomatoes don't need highly fertile soils, as too much nitrogen will produce leafy, succulent plants with little fruit. Dig through some well rotted compost to get your tomatoes going, once established, nutrition can be managed through regular foliar feeds through the growing season. If your soils are acidic, a light application of calcium, (lime), will reduce the incidence of blossom end rot on the fruit, a common problem in tomatoes.

Planting: Tomatoes transplant well from seedlings, you can either purchase established seedlings, or raise your own from seed. Start planting out seedlings when soil temperatures are around 17°C, mid October is a good time to start in the Adelaide Hills, or earlier on the Plains. Plant the seedlings deep in the soil, up to the first set of leaves. Roots will develop on the stem part that is under the ground, giving your tomatoes a good head start for the growing season. Mulch can be spread around the tomato, right up to the plant stem, to protect the roots from dying out.

Management: Most tomato varieties need staking to keep branches and fruit off the ground. Some pruning may be carried out to keep the plant canopy open and reduce the risk of disease. Fortnightly applications of seaweed products early in the growing season and liquid fertilisers, especially for fruit and flower production, are useful later season to encourage fruit to set. When the tomato begins flowering, reduce watering to twice a week, this creates a slight stress to the plant, triggering flower and fruit production.

Harvesting: Tomatoes need warmth rather than direct sunlight to ripen, they can be picked when showing a slight tinge of pink and left to ripen in a warm position, but to develop the best flavour, leave them on the bush until they are a rich red colour, and are slightly tender.

Companions: Basil is the most commonly known companion for tomatoes, others include; asparagus, onion, garlic, carrots, parsley, marigold and nasturtiums. Don't plant tomatoes with fennel, potatoes or stone fruit.

For more information

For more information about growing tomatoes visit www.tomatodirt.com Its an American website dedicated to the tomato. Follow the link to the 'Great Tomato Quiz' and see how you go!

Q: Why did the tomato go out with the prune?

A: Because he couldn't find a date!