



Things are hotting up in the garden!!

I'm not sure where the year has gone, I think I nearly missed November. November has been busy with Veg2Table visiting the Mawson Lakes Garden show and the Hills Garden and Environment Expo at Uraidla – both were fun days and we got to meet lots of happy gardeners.

By now, there should be lots of action in the garden. I have heard from a few people that their zucchinis are starting to march on – Bring on the creative zucchini recipes.

What to do in November

There is plenty to do in the veggie garden at this time of the year. Jobs include:

- If you have had garlic growing over winter, it is nearly time to harvest. After the leaves begin to die back, cut out the water. When around $\frac{3}{4}$ of the leaves have died back, take a fork and carefully lift the bulbs. Leave the bulbs outside to dry for a few days. Once the bulbs outer layers dry to papery store the garlic in a cool dark airy place. Garlic should store for at least 6 months under the right conditions.
- As the weather warms up, make sure you have plenty of mulch around your garden plants. Mulching helps keep the soil cool, and reduces evaporation, saving you water.
- Watch out for insects that may start attacking developing fruit trees. Common insects will include the Cherry or pear slug (small leach like slugs found on the leaves of pears, cherries and plums), and codling moth grubs. These are just starting to infest young apples, pears and quinces. Both pests can be controlled by using organic pest control options such as spinosad or insecticidal soaps.
- Keep up with fortnightly applications of seaweed extract to help keep plants growing strong and pest and disease free.
- Don't forget to tie back tomatoes as the branches get longer. Don't be scared to give them a good prune to improve airflow in and around the plant. As the plants start to flower, reduce watering to two good watering a week.
- As your rocket, spinach and leafy lettuces begin to set seed, sow more seed, so that you have an ongoing supply.

Some things to plant in November:

- Asian Greens, (Bok choy, pak choy)
- Basil
- Beans (climbing) and peas
- Beetroot
- Capsicum
- Carrots
- Celery
- Chilli
- Chives
- Corn
- Dill
- Eggplant
- Kohlrhabi
- Leek
- Lettuce and other salad greens
- Melons
- Rocket
- Silverbeet
- Spring onion
- Strawberries
- Tomato
- Zucchini

NB: this list is only an indication of some of the things that can be planted during November, 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: Eggplant

Eggplants or Aubergines are closely related to the tomato and potato. They are a great vegetable, (fruit really) for many uses, especially barbecued and more traditionally in Baba Ghanoush.

Varieties: Eggplant originates in Africa and southern Asia, so have adapted to a long hot growing seasons. Varieties available include Long Purple, Lebanese, and Listada di Gandia, an Italian Heirloom with is delicately striped.

Soil Preparation: Eggplants need a warm, sunny position with well drained soils. Soils need to have compost added and forked through before planting. After planting, the liquid fertilisers can be added on a regular basis throughout the growing season.

Planting: Plant advanced seedlings during September to December. Space plants approximately 60cm apart. Protect young plants from late frosts by covering them with soft drink bottles with the bottoms removed. For a family of four, 2 to 3 plants will be enough.

Management: Most eggplant 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. Common pests include aphids, spider mites and caterpillars.

Harvesting: Harvest fruits when the skins are glossy purple in colour. If eggplants are left on the bush for too long, the flesh becomes woody and bitter. The fruit can be harvested by cutting them with secateurs to avoid damaging the plant.

Companions: Beans, peas and basil.

Eggplant fact

A study published in 1993 in the New England Journal of Medicine showed that eggplant has by far the **highest level of nicotine of any vegetable**. But it's such a small amount that there's really no need for concern. You would have to eat between 20 and 40 pounds of eggplant to consume the amount of nicotine you'd get smoking one cigarette.

