




garden
STYLE
with Andrew Lucas,
Backyard Harvest

your garden
into action!

One of the wonderful things about living in south-western Victoria is that we experience four distinct seasons. With this year's late-winter leaving a somewhat cold and wet reminder of this seasonality, it's time to welcome spring with open arms!


Spring is a favourite time in the garden for most people, and who can really blame them. Flowers start to burst from their buds, birds chirp merrily and the chance of sunshine and double figure temperatures tempts us humans to venture out of hibernation!

A stunning silver princess gum in flower welcomes spring



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Spring 'to do' list

Feeding

Now we're through winter we start to prepare the soil for summer crops, with many of these being heavy feeders. Organic is the way to go, sprinkle blood and bone or pelletised poultry manure over your soil and fork in. If you're lucky enough to have access to sheep, cow (or other manure) incorporate it into your soil to provide structure as well as nutrients.

Composting

Heading into warmer weather means our soil needs to balance holding water and nutrients while still offering good drainage. Adding compost to your soil helps this process and with spring comes lots of grass clippings - the perfect compost ingredient! Compost needs exposure to air to break down properly so either invest in a compost tumbler or ensure you fork over your compost regularly.

TIP! Most home compost heaps are far too wet as they contain lots of food scraps and can become a smelly mess. Try adding shredded paper and turn your compost every few days for best results and sweet smelling compost!



Compost is the key to producing amazing, organic produce at home

Organic mulch such as this straw maintains moisture and eventually breaks down to feed your soil

Fruit Trees

If you've missed pruning your deciduous fruit trees this year, don't panic! Simply hold off pruning until late summer (or until the tree has finished fruiting). Think about netting fruit trees (especially stone fruit) and be kind to fruit bats and small birds by choosing nets with holes small enough to prevent your finger getting through.

TIP! Don't feed citrus trees while they're in flower or you'll gain lush green leaves but risk losing fruit production! Instead use a weak seaweed liquid feed fortnightly and save larger fertiliser applications for when the tree's not in flower.



A young lemon tree in full flower

Mulching

Warmer day and night time temperatures will see your garden's well watered soil start to be blanketed with weeds. Don't stress though! Most weeds are short-lived and can simply be turned back into the soil (using a hoe) to act as green manure, and then covered with mulch. Just make sure you do this before they form seed heads otherwise you'll be chasing them all summer...



What to plant now in your vegie patch

Asian greens	Leek
Beans - climbing	Lettuce
Beans - dwarf	Onion
Beetroot	Parsley
Broccoli	Parsnip
Cabbage	Snow peas
Capsicum	- seedlings
Carrots	Potato
Celery	Pumpkin
Celeriac	Radish
Chilli	Sage
Coriander	Silverbeet
Eggplant	Spinach
Fennel	Sweet corn
Globe Artichoke	Tomato
Kale	Zucchini
Kohlrabi	

TIP! If you've never planted using seeds before, start with larger seeds such as beans, corn and zucchini. These can be planted directly in their final growing place, so no messy transplanting or seed raising trays.

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