



garden
STYLE

Summer in the garden

Long hot days and warm nights are a gardener's dream... just so long as you're able to keep moisture in your soil. Read on to find the best tips for gardening success this summer.



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To do list

Move worm farms and seed raising to shaded areas

Worms appreciate a little sunshine during winter months, however they're very sensitive to hot weather and will quickly depart leaving us poor owners feeling like mass murderers. You'll also note that worm farms are often made of black plastic which amplifies the problem considerably. Move your worm farm and sensitive seedlings to a south facing fence and especially ensure they don't receive afternoon sun during hot weather.

Globe Artichokes are a summer delicacy and are surprisingly easy to grow

Worm farm Tip

Worm farms can be heavy, so empty the worm castings before trying to move the farm and add them to your soil. The super nutrient dense and sticky castings will help your soil maintain moisture during periods of low rainfall.



Rain water has no chlorine and less sodium than tap water, making it perfect for watering your veggies.

Get serious about watering

So we all understand that plants need water right? However, plants can only absorb nutrients from the soil in liquid form, so lack of water means lack of food too. Pick a hose nozzle that provides a gentle shower for plants and encourages the water to soak into your soil. Do avoid fittings with several nozzle settings. If you don't enjoy the zen-like regular watering ritual in summer and budget is no issue, invest in drip irrigation. Installed under the mulch, this is efficient and fuss-free watering, your plants will love. Unfortunately, the season our gardens need the most water is when it rains the least, so tanks at home make loads of sense. Interestingly, future summer rain is forecast to come in larger, single events with extended dry spells in-between.

Water harvesting Tip

Take advantage of large rain events by harvesting water off your own roof and into tanks. It reduces pressure on local water storages and helps minimise storm water damage to our creeks.



Keep the top of your worm farm cool with moistened bessian

GARDEN STYLE

Top up your mulch

Soil temperatures have warmed up considerably so it's time to get serious about mulch to prevent evaporation. Give your garden a good soaking before applying mulch and apply to around 5cm deep. Sugarcane mulch is weed free and has a fine structure which suits smaller gardens. For larger areas, pea straw or lucerne are the go, while eucalyptus based mulch suits native gardens.

Mulching Tip

The downside of mulching your garden is that light rain showers and watering won't penetrate to the soil below. If your soil dries out during hot weather it can become hydrophobic - meaning it actually repels water. Scratch aside your mulch regularly to make sure the water is penetrating deeply. If water runs over the surface and doesn't soak in, use a soil wetting agent - available at local nurseries to fix the problem.

Planted around Geelong Cup day, these Green Zebra tomatoes will be ripe by Christmas (but will stay green!)



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