

Greenslate Community Farm

Project Experience Sheet

Allotment Diary



The following can be used to get an idea of what can be done on the allotment for each month of the year. If you have any further suggestions or ideas please submit them via the website.

April

April is a very busy month for allotment holders. Days with more daylight hours, warm sunshine (sometimes) and fewer frosts. Keep an eye on the weather forecasts and keep fleece and insulation for seedling to hand. Don't be tempted to plan out seedlings before they've been hardened off. April is a good month to buy annual flower seeds from catalogues or the internet.

The Vegetable Plot

- The following seeds can be sown directly onto prepared ground now.
 - Potatoes, Radish, Parsnips, **Carrots**, Swede, Beetroot, Turnips
 - Spinach, Swiss Chard (once the last frost has gone), Broccoli, **Cabbage**, **Cauliflowers**, Sprouts
 - Peas, **Beans**, **Sweetcorn**
 - Spring Onions, Leeks, Shallots
 - Small quantities of salad leaves
 - **BOLD** = under a cloche
- Plants for growing out doors that can be planted now include:
 - Asparagus
 - Onion Sets, Garlic, Shallots
 - Chitted Potatoes
 - Fruit canes (raspberry/blackberry etc)
 - Fruit bushes and trees
 - Strawberries
- Prepare for the growing season by adding a layer of compost into the beds. 50-70mm should be about right.
- Plant chitted potatoes directly into the ground on into planter bags.
- Asparagus spears can be cut
- Support pea plants
- Seedling for carrots should be thinned out.
- Dig compost into potato beds
- Feed herbs
- Remove weeds from seed beds and cover with a blackened membrane. This will suppress weed growth and keep the ground a few degrees warmer which will help new plants to grow,
- Marigolds can be used to reduce attract insects to your allotment. Now is the ideal time to sow seeds.

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The Fruit Garden

- Strawberries can be added to prepared beds that have had plenty of rotted manure thoroughly dug in
- If a frost is expected, it's wise to protect fruit (and other smaller seedlings) with a fleece cover
- Canes and fruit bushes should be encouraged with the addition of a suitable fertiliser.

May

Things start to grow in earnest on the allotment in May but we've all heard it before "*Ne'er cast a clout till May be out*". May can be a busy month on the allotment but there's still chance of occasional frosts. Keep those fleece linings to hand.

Growing your own stuff is great but, while your marvellous produce is doing it's stuff and getting on with growing, so too are the weeds. Hoeing weeds is far easier and effective than letting them grow and then picking them. Gentle hoeing will prevent the weeds from taking root and establishing themselves.

The Vegetable Plot

- The following seeds can be sown directly onto prepared ground now.
 - Sprouts, Summer Cabbage
 - Celery, Celeriac
 - Leeks
 - Brassicas (Cauliflower, Kale, Broccoli)
 - Legumes (Peas and beans)
 - Salad and leaves
 - **Sweetcorn**
 - **Courgette** (once the soil is warm – towards the end of the month)
 - **Marrow, Pumpkin**
 - **BOLD** = under a cloche
- Plants for growing out doors that can be planted now include:
 - Artichoke
 - Celery, Fennel
 - Chillies, Peppers
 - Pumpkins, Squashes, Courgettes
 - Runner & French Beans
 - Main crop potatoes
- Create wigwams for climbing plants

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Greenslate Community Farm

Project Experience Sheet

Allotment Diary



- Earth up potatoes
- Thin out carrots, beetroots and fennel
- Sow herbs (Basil, Coriander and Parsley) every few weeks
- Asparagus spears can be harvested
- Pick 1/3 of rhubarb stems
- Keep weeding around onions to reduce competition for nutrients

The Fruit Garden

- Place netting over fruit crops to prevent the birds enjoying your crops more than you do
- Mulch fruit trees to keep moisture in the soil
- Remove raspberry suckers and strawberry runners
- Keep young trees well watered
- With new trees, remove blossom and fruit to help them produce more the following year.
- Protect strawberries with straw (to prevent rotting) and netting (to prevent birds)

June

June is a time to optimise the remaining spaces in an allotment. Planting radish, salad leaves in unoccupied spaces will help. And as usual, the battle with weeds continues so keep up with the hoeing (and, if we've had decent weather, keep watering)

The Vegetable Plot

- Earth up potatoes
- Net brassicas before the birds and butterflies get to them.
- Stake pea and bean plants
- Thin out root crop seedlings
- The following seeds can be sown directly onto prepared ground now.
 - Broccoli, Kale
 - French beans, peas and runner beans
 - Beetroots, carrots, swedes, turnips
 - Salad and leaves

The Fruit Garden

- Feed blueberries bushes
- Plant out
 - Strawberries
- Remove raspberry suckers
- Net fruit pants and bushes

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July

Enjoy the long sunny days in your allotment. You've worked hard to get to this stage and you should be seeing rewards in the shape of a thriving allotment with lots of produce growing frantically.

The Vegetable Plot

- Carrots should be thinned out in the evening because they give out less of a scent to carrot fly.
- Remove all surplus carrots and bits of carrots from the plot by burying deep into the compost heap.
- Spread mulch across the plot and keep watering
- Check brassicas for butterfly eggs and asparagus for beetles
- Earth up potatoes
- Pick veg while it is young and tender (courgettes can rapidly turn into marrows)
- Protect cauliflower heads from the sun with an inverted outer leaf
- Sowing:
 - Last chance for sowing French and runner beans
 - Cabbages, Kahl, Sprouting Broccoli
 - Beetroots, Carrots, Turnips, Radishes
 - Salad leaves, Rocket, Swiss Chard

The Fruit Garden

- Cut back old strawberry leaves and use runners to create new plants
- Pinch out tomato side shoots throughout the summer

August

The Vegetable Plot

- P

The Fruit Garden

- S

September

If you are rotating your crops, now is a good time to record what was grown in your allotment this year. Photos or sketches/drawings could be useful too. Record successes and failures to help with future planning. Store seeds in dry, clean paper bags or envelopes for using next season. Give nature a helping hand by turning the compost heap.

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The Vegetable Plot

- Deadhead flowers to prolong the season
- Earth up celery
- Feed leeks and celeriac
- Lift any onions on the plot
- Plant out:
 - Onion sets
 - Strawberries
 - Spring Cabbage

The Fruit Garden

- Raspberry canes can be cut after fruiting
- Support tomato plants
- Ripen green tomatoes in the sun

October

The Vegetable Plot

- P

The Fruit Garden

- S

November

The Vegetable Plot

- P

The Fruit Garden

- S

December

The Vegetable Plot

- P

The Fruit Garden

- S

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Allotment Diary



January

The Vegetable Plot

- P

The Fruit Garden

- S

February

The Vegetable Plot

- P

The Fruit Garden

- S

March

The Vegetable Plot

- P

The Fruit Garden

- S

Lessons Learned:

- Hoeing is a great preventative measure for reducing weeds in allotments
- For a succession of produce, sow one set of seeds and a few weeks later so another set
- Think about the size of the plant that will grow from the seed. Allow space of its growth both above and below ground.

Acknowledgements

Greenslate Community Farm would like to thank the following in assisting us with this project:

- Websites
- Individuals
- Organisations
 - www.thompson-morgan.com
 - www.channel4.com

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