

APRIL WHAT TO DO NOW IN THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

There's lots to do in April!

It's time to sow seeds for all sorts of different vegetables. Some can be planted outside and some need to be started off in a greenhouse or on a windowsill. If you have a lot of slugs and snails, it can be very difficult to raise seedlings outdoors because they can be eaten as soon as they emerge. Sometimes it's better to plant your seeds in modules and raise them in a cool bright place such as the shed windowsill, unheated greenhouse or a cool room in the house. When they have grown to be strong healthy seedlings you can plant them out and they will be big enough to withstand the odd nibble from pests.

SEEDS TO SOW NOW:

Beans – French and Runner (inside)
Beetroot
Broad beans
Broccoli or Calibrese
Brussels sprouts
Autumn cabbage
Carrots
Chard
Courgettes and Marrows (inside)
Cucumbers (inside)

Leeks
Lettuces
Peas
Pumpkins and Squashes (inside)
Radishes
Rocket
Spinach
Spring Onions
Sweetcorn (inside)
Tomatoes (inside)

Many herbs can also be planted now, too

PLANT OUT NOW:

Any seedlings of broad beans, lettuces or summer cabbages that you started off earlier.
Potatoes – second early potatoes can be planted at the start of April, and maincrop potatoes later in the month.

OTHER JOBS:

Pot up tomato seedlings when they are 8cm tall.
Put twiggly sticks in to support peas as they start to grow.
Split herb plants – chives, thyme, lemon balm and mint can be divided to make more plants.
If you have been forcing rhubarb it's time to give it a rest, and a feed with a general fertilizer.
You can still harvest any rhubarb that wasn't forced.
Keep those weeds under control!

HARVEST:

Sprouting broccoli, leeks, welsh onions and rhubarb can all still be picked and eaten this month.
You might also be able to pick the first asparagus if the weather is warm enough to encourage it to appear.

JUST FOR FUN:

Wooden lolly sticks make great **plant labels** with the advantage of being biodegradable and more fun than plastic ones. You (or the kids) could paint them using a waterproof paint and use them to label up a pretty pot planted up with seedlings to give as a gift. Lolly sticks cost about the same as plastic labels – about £1 for 100, and they can be bought on line.

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