

## SEPTEMBER 2010

### Week 1: September gardening

Spring gets everyone out into the garden

#### Vegies to sow in September - Pumpkins

Pumpkins take a while to grow, so get them started as soon as possible. Once the soil has lost its winter chill, sow 3 or 4 pumpkin seeds into well-drained mounds of soil. In colder areas you can get a head start by sowing into pots in a protected spot and transplanting as soon as the frosts are over for the year. Yates Buttercup, Butternut and Golden Nugget are the best pumpkins to choose if you want compact, small-family-sized fruit.

#### Flowers to sow in September – Cosmos Bright Eyes

Yates Cosmos Bright Eyes is a cheery, summer-flowering annual that adds a warm touch to the garden. There's much more to this simple flower, though, because for every packet sold Yates donates 40c to Retina Australia. Over the years, this packet has raised more than \$100,000 towards research and support for the many Australians (especially young Australians) who are affected by genetic eye diseases. World Retina Day this year is on 27 September.

#### Feed in September

What to feed in September?

Pretty much every plant in the garden. Yates Acticote is ideal for pots. Dynamic Lifter Advanced for Roses will also feed fast-growing flowering plants like hibiscus. DL Fruit & Citrus

is suitable for all fruiting trees. Yates Blood & Bone is a traditional favourite for preparing vegie beds, but fast-growing young vegies and herbs should be hurried on with regular waterings of Thrive Soluble or Aquasol.

#### Prune in September

Use your thumb and forefinger to tip prune new growth and keep plants bushy.

#### September pest watch

It's amazing to see the way garden pests appear as the weather warms. While they seem to appear as if from nowhere, it's probably more likely that they've been pupating or hiding in eggs in protected spots (like cracks in the bark). As soon as they realise spring has sprung, they begin breeding rapidly.

Vigilance is the key to garden pest control. A gentle, natural control like Yates Nature's Way Pyrethrum will usually take care of sucking pests like aphids, thrips and lace bugs. For a longer lasting result (which means less frequent spraying) use Confidor, which can be applied on all ornamentals and many vegetables and fruit.

#### September job file

Make a point of visiting open gardens to gather ideas and inspiration. The new *Australia's Open Garden Scheme Guidebook* has just been released.

#### Plant of the month

Wisteria (pictured) is a vigorous climber that occasionally outgrows its welcome but when in full flower, it's magnificent. Prune back after flowering to control its growth and to prevent seed pods developing. If space is a problem, grow wisteria in a large pot and train it as a small 'tree'.



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### Week 2: The edible garden in spring

The arrival of spring brings exciting opportunities to make a new start in the edible garden. Here are some timely seasonal suggestions:



- Remove winter vegies that are past their best. Compost the remnants.
- Turn over soil and mix in some compost or aged manure and some Dynamic Lifter pellets.
- If the bed has been used to grow vegies for a number of years, think about leaving it to have a rest until at least the end of the year.
- Practise crop rotation – this means planting a crop that is unrelated to the previous one. A good example would be planting zucchini after lettuce.
- As soon as the soil has lost its chill, sow seeds of beans, sweet corn and tomatoes into well-prepared garden beds.
- In cold areas, seeds of these warm season varieties can be sown in pots for transplanting as the weather gets warmer.
- Build raised up mounds for planting seeds of the cucurbit family (cucumbers, pumpkins, zucchini, melons and squash).
- Pinch out the tops of broad beans as soon as they're flowering well. This will encourage more flowers to form. Harvest the beans regularly - this means more beans.
- Eggplants, okra and capsicums take a while to get to fruiting stage, so get them

started as soon as it's warm enough in your area.

- Sow a few lettuce seedlings every couple of weeks so that you can spread the harvest over a longer period.
- Plant out sprouted potatoes and chokos. In warmer climates, plant sweet potato cuttings and ginger roots.
- Well-established asparagus clumps will be producing new spears that can be cut and enjoyed at their spring best. Remember, though, that young asparagus plants shouldn't be harvested until at least their second year.
- The warmth-loving herbs, basil and dill, can be planted now. They grow easily from Yates seeds. Both chives and curled parsley make charming edges for the borders of vegie beds.
- Remember, climbing plants take up less space than their low-growing cousins. Yates climbing bean Purple King has fascinating purple pods that turn green when they're cooked.
- It's frustrating when pests and problems attack but no-one wants to use heavy duty toxic chemicals on their edible plants. Yates Nature's Way range has some low toxic solutions. Dipel controls leaf-eating caterpillars and has no withholding period (you can wash and eat your vegies straight away). Yates Natrasoap Insect & Mite Killer, which also has no withholding period, helps take care of sap-suckers like aphids.

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### Week 3: Tomato and basil

Although they were first developed for human consumption in vastly different parts of the globe - basil in India and tomatoes in the Americas - basil and tomatoes have become inextricably linked together. Fragrant, oil-rich basil leaves combine with sweetly acidic tomato fruit to create a much-loved blend of flavours.

And both plants share another characteristic: they love the warm weather, which is why this is such a good time of year to start them off. In cooler climates they're usually grown as summer annuals and replanted each spring. Where it's warmer they'll last longer (although tropical downpours can often spoil the plants).

Yates seed range has a good selection of both basil and tomato varieties.

#### Basil

Sweet Basil is the true favourite. It can grow up to a metre tall and produces an abundance of fragrant leaves for months. Seeds germinate best in warm soil with daytime temperatures of about 20 degrees. In cooler areas you can get a head start by sowing seed indoors, then planting out when conditions are warmer. Begin picking as soon as there are plenty of leaves, and pinch out any incipient flowering shoots.

Basil Gourmet Mix (pictured) is a lucky dip selection of basil varieties, including Thai Basil, Lemon Basil, Cinnamon Basil and Purple Basil. With this packet you can grow a mixed bed of basil varieties that can be harvested to suit different food styles.

Purple Basil is a deeply-coloured form of sweet basil. It can be used in the kitchen but is equally popular as a garden ornamental where its richly-coloured leaves contrast with softer shades. This form of basil is especially susceptible to disease, so grow it in an open sunny position.

Basil just loves nitrogen, so keep it moving along with regular applications of nitrogen-rich Thrive Soluble or Aquasol. For maximum flavour pick basil leaves in the morning after the dew dries, but before the day heats up.



#### Tomatoes

There are so many tomato varieties it's easy to get confused, but the following in the Yates seed range are some of the most popular. Yates Small Fry has cherry-sized tomatoes on a rather sprawly bush. Tiny Tim fruit are of similar size but grow on a compact bush that's suitable for pots. Grosse Lisse and Apollo are favourite salad types, while

Burke's Backyard Italian Tomato and Heirloom Favourites are for lovers of traditional tomato flavour. Summerstar is the best choice for the subtropics, and Roma is the cook's selection.

Sow tomato seeds into warm soil or a protected pot. Feed with Thrive Flower & Fruit and protect from pests and diseases with Yates Tomato Dust.

Though they're reputed to be good companion plants, basil and tomato shouldn't be grown too closely together. They both need breathing space and room to spread. But in the kitchen they'll happily mix. Bruschetta is the best-known example of this flavour-filled marriage.

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### Week 4: Spring into the lawn

Spring is the ideal season to rejuvenate the lawn and get it into top condition before the hot weather arrives. So here are some timely suggestions for spring lawn care:

- **Weed**

Weeds will almost certainly have invaded the lawn during the cool weather, so apply a selective weedkiller to remove non-grass invaders. Always read the label carefully to make sure that a product is suitable for your grass type. Yates Bindii & Clover Killer

can be mixed and sprayed over the lawn or spread with the help of the handy, horizontal sprinkle bar attachment for the Yates or Hortico Watering Can. Buffalo grass is sensitive to many sprays but the new Yates BuffaloPRO is a convenient hose-on that is safe to use on buffalo.

- **Feed**

Spring is the best season for feeding the lawn and, with Yates new Lawn Master, you won't need to fertilise again for another three months. Plus, because the clever slow release fertiliser in Lawn Master doesn't have to be watered in, it's a very easy way to feed. – just spread the fine particles around according to the recommended application rate. One 4kg bag will cover 220 square metres.

If you'd rather use an organic fertiliser for the lawn, Dynamic Lifter Organic lawn food is ideal. Its fine particles don't just feed the grass, they also encourage healthy soil.



Dynamic Lifter Advanced for Lawns combines composted chicken manure particles with a range of added nutrients that are ideal for lawns.

Yates Weed 'n' Feed, available in an easy hose-on or a dry, granular formulation, is a one-step method of controlling weeds and feeding grass at the same time.

- **Fresh start**

Spring is a great season to sow a new lawn, lay turf or thicken an existing lawn. Yates LawnSmart All Season blend has been

specially developed to mix with existing grasses. It has reasonable shade tolerance so will flourish under a light tree canopy where many other grasses would struggle.

Good preparation is the key when laying new turf. Mixing some Yates Dynamic Lifter Turf Starter into the soil will add gentle organic goodness that won't damage growing roots. Dynamic Lifter Turf Starter also contains water-storing crystals that help prevent the turf roots drying out before they have the chance to establish.

- **Let roots breathe**

Lawns become compacted over time, which means less oxygen around the grass roots. Spiking vertically with a garden fork will help loosen the soil around the roots, but coring is an even better solution. Coring means using a hollow-tined fork or machine to remove thin vertical plugs of soil from the lawn. This ensures that the grass roots have access to plenty of oxygen. Mechanical lawn aerators can be rented from equipment hire companies.