

THE GOOD LIFE – SOW, GROW, GATHER AND ENJOY



In the garden with Wendy Matheson

After what seems like interminable months of snow and slush it is always exhilarating to see the first vestiges of a new spring start to emerge from the muddy ground.

The wonderful sense of new beginnings is a feeling that returns each year when the snowdrops start to flower and aconites begin to appear through the carpet of autumn leaves to turn the woodland floor into a carpet of green and yellow.

Snow and icy weather is a common occurrence in this part of the country in February; however this should not deter you from planning ahead as in no time at all the growing season will be upon us.

In the current economic climate with austerity measures and thriftiness what better way to start the growing season than by planning your own herbs and veg garden? February is an ideal month to source the seeds or to order plug plants for transplanting later in the spring.

So why not become a Tom and Barbara for the coming season and reap the benefits of growing some of your own produce?



Key issues to remember when organising a kitchen garden plot for the first time.

- Make it manageable – both in size and accessibility
- Design the space to be as attractive as possible to blend in with other areas of the garden
- Include veg and salads into your existing beds and borders for a more contemporary and eclectic look. For example, beets and varieties of salad leaves are particularly attractive for their colour whilst globe artichoke and asparagus are fantastic for structural interest
- Don't be too ambitious in the first year, grow less challenging plants initially in order to gain confidence in your horticultural achievements
- Plant companion plants to avoid pests, for example campanulas to deter carrot fly
- Choose plants appropriate for the site and the climate
- Plant successively to avoid over production
- Get the family involved with choosing the varieties which may inspire interest and bring on help with watering, pricking out and harvesting

Other tasks for February

- Prune trees and shrubs, both ornamentals and fruit
- Check flower beds for plants that may have heaved in the cold weather
- Replace mulch as needed
- Check outside plants and trees for animal damage after the snow
- Start seeds of cool season vegetables and flowers

Book of the month

Grow Your Own Veg by Carol Klein.
Published by Mitchell Beazley, £16.99 ISBN 978-1845332938



Tried and tested seeds suppliers online or at your local garden centre:

- www.unwins.co.uk
- www.thompson-morgan.com
- www.realseeds.co.uk
- www.suttons.co.uk
- www.marshalls-seeds.co.uk
- www.nickys-nursery.co.uk
- www.plantsofdistinction.co.uk
- www.organiccatalogue.com

More seed suppliers can be seen on the RHS website seed suppliers listing at www.rhs.org.uk

For more serious vegetable plots and allotment advice visit www.allotment.org.uk

Website of the month

www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/Grow-Your-Own

Win a garden design consultation

To win a free garden design consultation answers the following question:

Name six root vegetables grown in the Highlands

Send entries to info@wmgardensdesign.com

Winning readers will receive free advice via email on receipt of images of their gardens.

CONTACT WENDY

If you have any questions or you would like any advice on garden design or garden makeover please contact Wendy at her studio: info@wmgardensdesign.com or 07703 737 530