

*"It's difficult to think anything but pleasant thoughts while eating a home-grown tomato."
Lewis Grizzard*

NOTES FOR JULY

JOBS TO BE DONE/THINGS TO LOOK AT SOWING AND PLANTING GUIDE

VEGETABLE	SOW/PLANT	NOTES
Artichokes - Globe	Plant out until the middle of July, for a harvest next year.	If it is the plants first year – cut off any flower heads as soon as they form to make a stronger plant next year. Harvest from July to September
Asparagus		Having a rest until next year.
Asparagus Peas		Must be picked when very young (about 1 inch (2.5cm). Do not overcook. I was not impressed when I grew them.
Aubergines	Need a long hot summer – Good Luck!	Watch for greenfly. Water well and feed with high potash feed every two weeks once the fruits are forming.
Beans Broad		Continue Harvest. Watch out for Black fly or the ants that feed on them. Pinch out the growing tips of mature plants. Keep watered.
Beans French Climbing	You can still try sowing these in pots to plant out for a late autumn crop. (Early frosts permitting)	Weather permitting July should see the start of the harvest period. Do not allow the soil to dry out.
Beans French Dwarf	Sow until mid-July	Weather permitting July should see the start of the harvest period. Do not allow the soil to dry out. Regular picking is very important for all the Bean family to ensure they keep cropping.
Beans Runner	Very early July is the very last chance to sow	Weather permitting July should see the start of the harvest period. Do not allow the soil to dry out. In very hot dry weather flowers can shrivel with forming beans, a light spray of water can help. Regular picking is very important, if there are flowers the more you pick the more beans the plant will try to produce.
Beans Borlotti & other beans grown for seeds.		You can normally eat the young beans – but they are best grown for their seeds.
Beetroot	Sow	Harvest earlier sowings - Sow now for small tasty roots in late summer & autumn. Can be left to grow on into early winter. Don't forget to thin out previous sowings. Allowing the soil to dry out causes the plant to bolt. Why not try roasting baby beets with oil & balsamic vinegar.
Broccoli – Sprouting A mass of small separate florets on a long stem.	Some Varieties can still be sown.	To harvest Nov to Mar Dates seem flexible depends on the weather. We had some plots harvesting in May this year. Check for any signs of pest problems. Deal with them quickly when discovered. Caterpillars and mealy aphids are certainly about now. Cut rather than break when harvesting.
Broccoli Calabrese Cauliflower like heads (often just called Broccoli especially in shops)	Sow early July Plant	Check for any signs of pest problems. Deal with them quickly when discovered. Caterpillars and mealy aphids are certainly about now. Sowing dates for both Sprouting and normal Broccoli are much more flexible these days with many new varieties being introduced. Commercial it is now a year-round crop, with a little help from polytunnels.
Brussels Sprouts		Ensure firmly planted. Earth up a little if required – keep weed free.
Cabbage Spring Summer sown normally to overwinter Harvest April – May	Sow now to Harvest next March or April.	Start off in pots or in a seedbed. Check for any signs of pest problems. Deal with them quickly when discovered. For good cabbages next year they need to be well enough established to survive the winter frost, but not too large or they may bolt. Sow some over a period of weeks to get it right.
Cabbage Summer & Autumn. Sow under glass in Feb or in seedbed March/April Harvest Aug – Oct		Some cabbages of the pointed variety like Hispi can be sown from Jan to June & harvested from May to October. Check for any signs of pest problems. Deal with them quickly when discovered. Caterpillars and mealy aphids are certainly about now.

VEGETABLE	SOW/PLANT	NOTES
Cabbage Red Harvest Aug – Oct		Most Red Cabbages store very well Check for any signs of pest problems. Deal with them quickly when discovered. Caterpillars and mealy aphids are certainly about now.
Cabbage Winter/Savoy Harvest Nov - Feb	Plant	Some varieties have extended harvesting dates or mature quickly. Check for any signs of pest problems. Deal with them quickly when discovered. Caterpillars and mealy aphids are certainly about now.
Carrots	Sow early in July for a late harvest.	Harvest. - Last chance to sow main crop carrots Like Autumn King. Do not forget to thin out previous sowings – doing this job late in the day is supposed to help reduce the risk of carrot fly problems.
Cauliflower Spring/Early Summer.		To Harvest May to Aug. Keep the heads white using the outer leaves to protect them from the sun.
Cauliflower Summer/Autumn.	Plant Out	To Harvest Aug to Nov Look for pests and deal with them quickly on all Cauliflowers.
Cauliflower Winter.	Sow/Plant out	To Harvest Jan to April. Consider using a collar around the base to stop cabbage root fly.
Celery	Plant out/thin	Harvest Aug to Nov. Keep well-watered to stop it becoming stringy. Blanch stems as required. Watch out for slugs.
Celeriac	Plant out/thin	Harvest Sep to Mar. Keep well-watered.
Chicory		Harvest Oct to Dec
Chillies Ever grown Habanero or Dorset Naga Pepper – Let me know?	Like sunshine, warmth & water.	Too much Nitrogen can mean lots of leaf and few chillies. Watch out for greenfly. Keep moist and feed with high potash feed every two weeks once the fruits are forming.
Chinese Cabbage	A good month to sow for hearty plants.	12-16 Weeks to Harvest
Courgettes		Start harvesting. These are hungry plants that benefit for a regular liquid feed. Keep moist rather than wet to stop root tip rot, especially when in flower. Best picked when they are small (4-5 ins/10/12 cm), they can grow very quickly , and your courgettes look like marrows and taste rather watery. Watch out for slugs
Cucumbers Ridge & Greenhouse		These are hungry plants that benefit for a regular liquid feed. Check supports on indoor and outdoor cucumbers (if used). Apply extra compost around the base of the plant Cucumbers like to be moist not waterlogged. Remember to check if you need to remove Male Flowers for your chosen variety.
Endive (A form of leaf Chicory)	Sow	Great addition to a winter salad bowl. Will need to be Blanched to mellow it slightly bitter flavour.
Florence Fennel	Sow up to Mid-July Plant out	Late Summer Variety - Keep well-watered.
Garlic		Keep free of weeds. – Dry well before storing. Generally it does not seem to have been a good year on site for Garlic.
Kale	Sow/Plant	Harvest Nov to April – Able to survive very cold weather.
Kohl Rabi	Sow Early July	Harvest earlier sowings. Great in late season salads Don't forget to thin out previous sowings
Leeks	Plant out in to 6-inch-deep holes	You can use the space from first early potatoes or over wintered Broad Beans, if available! Watch out for leek moth caterpillars. Don't plant them where you have grown onions/shallot/garlic in the last couple of years – if possible.
Lettuce Butterhead – Cos – Loose leaf Crisp head - Romaine – Winter.	Sow Plant Out Sow fortnightly.	Harvest early sowings - Keep well-watered. - Do not sow lettuce on really hot days; they do not germinate well in hot conditions. Thin out previously planted seeds if required.
Lettuce Lambs (Corn Salad – Mache)	Sow with a bit of luck	Salad leaves – water regularly. Can be sown in full sun or partial shade. Grows quickly will normally need thinning out.
Marrow		These are hungry plants that thrive on manure & compost. Raise large marrows off the ground to reduce the risk of them rotting.
Melon	Plant out if not already done so.	Plants outside will need protection. Female melon flowers have a small fruit shaped mellow directly behind the flower, male ones have just a slim stem. You can aid pollination by breaking off the male flower using it to pollinate the female flower. Best done when you have 2 to 4 flowers open. Keep moist not wet

VEGETABLE	SOW/PLANT	NOTES
Mizuna	Sow on a regular basis until September	Harvest – A cut and come again vegetable - fast growing. Great in Salads or stir-fry. Peppery, mustard taste.
Onions Spring	Sow regularly - Can be slow to germinate	Harvest – Thin out any earlier sowings if needed. Weed and water regularly.
Onions		Weed regularly – Water in dry weather but don't overwater it encourage rot. Cut off any flower buds as soon as they appear.
Pak Choi		Harvest
Parsnip		Do not forget to thin out previous sowings. Keep free from weeds.
Peas Early		Harvest. Consider leaving the roots in the ground, they are rich in Nitrogen, which will be released as they rot down.
Peas Maincrop	Sow a late Maincrop Pea like Ambassador	Harvest. Consider leaving the roots in the ground, they are rich in Nitrogen, which will be released as they rot down. Late sown Peas will need to be kept well-watered if we have little rain!! They should be ready to eat in late September.
Peas Mangetout		Harvest. Consider leaving the roots in the ground, they are rich in Nitrogen, which will be released as they rot down.
Peas Sugar snap		Harvest. Consider leaving the roots in the ground, they are rich in Nitrogen, which will be released as they rot down.
Peas Petit Pois		Harvest mid late June onwards. Consider leaving the roots in the ground, they are rich in Nitrogen, which will be released as they rot down.
Peppers Sweet or Bell	Like sunshine, warmth & water.	Too much Nitrogen can mean lots of leaf and few peppers Watch out for greenfly. Keep moist and feed with high potash feed every two weeks once the fruits are forming.
Potatoes New		Harvest. – Watch out for signs of Potato Blight
Potatoes Second Early		Check and harvest if ready – Watch out for signs of Potato Blight
Potatoes Main Crop		Earth up again if needed. – Watch out for signs of Potato Blight
Pumpkin		Watch out for slugs.
Radishes	Sow Summer & Winter varieties	Harvest 5 – 8 weeks after sowing. Do not sow on recently manured ground, or in very hot weather. Thin out early sowings if needed. It is time to sow winter radish now.
Rhubarb		July see the end of the Rhubarb harvest – Remove any flower spikes as they form – Do not leave them to go to seed.
Rocket Salad & Wild	Sow	Adds a bit of bite to a summer salad. Use the young leaves. Salad Rocket has wider leaves and a milder taste. Wild is less prone to bolting and lasts into autumn or early winter
Salad Leaves	Sow	Cut and come again 3 or 4 times. Avoid sowing in very hot weather.
Salsify		
Scorzonera		
Shallots		Keep weeded. Shallots do not like competition. - Should be ready for harvest in late July. Harvest on a dry day using a fork to avoid damage to the bulbs. Separate the bulbs for storage and allow to dry off.
Spinach		Great when used as young leaves. They like Nitrogen and water. Goes to seed easily in hot weather.
Spinach Perpetual	Sow	Sown now for a supply of fresh vegetables early next spring. Keep plants weeded and watered.
Squash (Summer)		Watch for slugs. Faster growing than Winter Squash, they are not normally stored. Some quite unusual shapes are available.
Swede	Plant out any pot grown swedes	Do not allow to dry out, big changes between dry and wet soil can case the swede to split. Not quite as easy to grow as their tough appearance would indicate, they are prone to all the brassica diseases.
Sweetcorn	Water Regularly for best results.	If the cobs are forming and the wind speed is low, give the tassels a gentle tap to encourage fertilization, the corns are pollinated by wind not insects. You are supposed to be able to eat perfectly ripen Sweetcorn raw – I have never tried.
Swiss Chard (Leaf beets)	Sow	Sow now for Autumn harvest going on into the new year. A relative of the beetroot but grown for its leaves not root. A cut and come again vegetable – use young leaves in salad.

VEGETABLE	SOW/PLANT	NOTES
Tomatoes	I would be interested to know what varieties you think grow well on site?	Pinch outside shoots to improve crop. Continue to tie in and support cordon tomatoes. Continue feeding regularly. Remove lower leaves that are shading trusses. Watch for any signs of blight on site. Do not allow the soil to dry out or the fruit is likely to split when watered again
Turnip	Sow	Harvest earlier sowings. New sowing ready in 6 to 10 weeks. Remember that turnips are members of the Brassica family
Watercress Aqua Land cress – American Cress.	Sow	Keep moist – Like Rocket will lift a salad. Unlike watercress does not need to be grown in water. It spreads easily.
Welsh Onions	Sow	Look rather like a large Spring Onion, they grow in clumps rather than as a single onion. Grown for the stem as much as bulb which tastes great.

HERBS

HERB	SOW	NOTES
Basil Sweet	Sow	Harvest – Remove any flowers to encourage new leaf production.
Bay		Harvest
Borage		Harvest
Chervil	Sow	Harvest Germinates more easily now the weather is warmer
Chives/Garlic Chives		Chive flowers are edible and make a nice decoration for your salad bowl. Cut off flowers before they seed.
Coriander	Sow	Germinates more easily now the weather is warmer. Harvest – collect seeds for next year if required.
Dill		Harvest – collect seeds for next year if required.
Fennel Common		Harvest – collect seeds for next year if required.
Hyssop (Liquorice Mint)		Loved by Bees – Can grow up to 2 feet (60cm). Take cuttings.
Lavender		Take cuttings and pot up. Cut and hang up for drying when ready. Lavender is now fashionable amongst foodies.
Marjoram Sweet		Easier to grow from cuttings than seed. Trim after it has flowered.
Mint		Roots spread quickly Consider containing them
Oregano		Harvest when ready – Take cuttings from healthy non-flowering shoots.
Parsley	Sow	Germinates more easily now the weather is warmer. Harvest when ready
Rosemary		Take cuttings and pot up. Cut and hang up for drying when ready. Will grow into a large bush unless clipped back
Sage		Will grow into a large bush unless clipped back Take cuttings and pot up. Harvest when ready. Cut and hang up for drying when ready.
Tarragon French		Much better for cooking Take cuttings from healthy non-flowering shoots.
Tarragon Russian		Best used to make tarragon vinegar or in salad dressings. Slightly bitter aftertaste. Harvest
Thyme		Peg down a stem to form roots to propagate. Cut and hang up for drying when ready.

Many herbs are best sown on a little and often basis, so you always have some available.

Dill, Fennel, Marjoram and Thyme are examples of herbs best sown this way.

JOBS FOR JULY

July *should* be a bright and sunny month, with harvests well under way and the long pleasant evenings enabling you more choice of when to work on your allotment. Watering and weeding with an eye on pest control should be the main jobs this month. Well that is the theory, life and our very fickle weather however may have a very different July in store us, time will tell.

Mulches help retain moisture in the soil; however they do this by maintaining the soil conditions as they are. Never apply mulch to soil that is already dry, as any rain that falls may not make it through the mulch to the soil below for some time.

Sweetcorn is a shallow rooted crop that can benefit from mulches or groundcover to help retain moisture in the soil. If we have strong winds in June and July, it may be necessary to stake at least the outside Sweetcorn plants in your block. Some people recommend growing squash or courgettes near to Sweetcorn, allowing it to spread beneath the plants providing an effective form of natural ground cover. Has any tried this, please let me know the results?

Aubergine, melons, Cucumbers and pumpkins should be growing well this month. If we see fewer Bees than normal on site because of the colder than expected weather you may have to consider resorting to hand pollination, especially with Aubergines. Always choose a dry day, allowing any morning dew to dry off the plants first. Having a few Bee friendly flowers on your plot can make a big difference.

Tomatoes and other hungry plants will benefit from regular liquid feeding, especially if grown in containers. Do not add a capful for luck, over strong liquid feeds will burn leaves and do more harm than good. Remember Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Courgettes and Beans are prime examples of plants, which stop producing if they are allowed to produce mature fruit or pods, which are left unpicked. Harvesting these plants regularly will ensure continued crop production. Check the internet for ideas for chutneys, cakes, sauces, or freezing as methods to deal with any excess crops. Salad leaves, radish, coriander and parsley will also quickly run to seed in hot weather, again regular sowing of small amounts is normally the best answer.

Regular hoeing is still necessary to keep weeds under control, hopefully by now some of the broad leaf or denser foliage plants like Courgettes, Pumpkins and Potatoes will be providing enough shade to discourage weed growth under them. Remember to try to choose a warm sunny day when hoeing so the weeds lying on the surface die off rather than re-root. Deep rooted weeded will need digging out or spot selective weed killer treatment.

Check all fruit and vegetables regularly for signs of pest and disease. **Never** let up on the on-going battle with slugs and snails or forget to recover you cabbages etc to keep the birds from striping it overnight.

FRUIT

1. Continue to harvest Strawberries and keep the plants protected from the birds with netting. Peg down a single runner from healthy strawberry plants, either directly into the soil or into a 3-inch pot (7.5 cm) using a "U" shaped piece of fence wire or similar. Always choose the first runner on the stem if it has more than one. Once it has successfully rooted sever it from the parent plant. Cut off any runners that you do not need.

Many people give strawberry plants a crew cut once they have finished fruiting; removing any straw or other ground covering and hoeing in a general-purpose feed such as Growmore. Feeding plants at this time of year should encourage less leaf growth and more fruit than a spring feed. Consider replacing any plants over 3 years old with fresh stock.

2. Always, try to pick soft fruit in dry conditions. Soft fruit picked when wet has a tendency to go mushy or grow mould rather quickly. Pick gooseberries as soon as they are ripe with the stalk still attached if possible. The birds love Gooseberries & Currants and you may need to use netting to keep some for yourself.

3. Thin fruit if necessary, and not already done in June. Apples, Apricots, Peaches Pears and Plums; need room to grow and leaving an excessive amount of fruit on the tree will not give the best crop. "June drop," which does not always happen in June, is a natural event for fruit, particularly apples; many gardeners wait until it has occurred before manually thinning fruit, if required.

4. Once **Summer** raspberries have finished fruiting; they should be pruned to prepare the way for next year's crop. The old canes, which are darker coloured and often have evidence of this year's fruit on them, need to be cut off at or near ground level. Tie in the new canes to provide support and minimize wind damage over winter.

Doing this straight after fruiting, help to get rid of any pests living on the old canes and should improve next year's crop. Dig out any unwanted suckers and thin out raspberries if they are getting too dense. Now is a good time to weed the area around the raspberry canes dealing with any perennial weeds by digging out or using a spot weed killer.

5. Keep on training the new shoots on Blackberries, loganberries etc.

VEGETABLES

1. Keep an eye out for Cucumber Mosaic Virus! This common plant virus affects other plants as well including courgettes, spinach, lettuce, celery, tomatoes, squash, melons and quite a few flowers. It causes patches on leaves sometimes they appear mottled with yellow and green areas, the leave curly downwards, are distorted and smaller than normal. Plant growth is stunted, and the fruit is often distorted. No cure is available to us. It is primarily spread by aphids and other insects but can be transmitted on garden tools and unwashed fingers. (Please remember do not wash your hands in the water butts please!) Chickweed, groundsel and a few other perennial weeds are known to harbour the disease overwinter, although it is not normally able to survive in the soil so keeping the weeds under control will help.

2. Remove side shots from tomatoes as they form, this does not apply to bush or tumbling tomatoes. Pinch out the tops of climbing beans when they reach the top of your canes.
3. Water when and if required. French Beans, Runner Beans, Lettuce, Rocket, Cauliflowers and Courgettes especially will need to be watered in dry spells to stop them running to seed. Do not just sprinkle a few drops on the surface, it will probably not penetrate down to the roots and will do little for the plant. It is far better to give plants a good watering less frequently, this ensures that the water will get to the roots of your crops, rather than just evaporate off the surface of the soil.
4. Watch for signs of downy mildew on onions and of course Blight on Potatoes and tomatoes. When it is time to harvest your onions loosen the soil around the roots a few days before harvest. Choose a dry spell, lift and lay the onions on the ground in the sun. The more thoroughly they are dried the better they will keep.
5. Continue thinning out your carrots, parsnips, beetroot etc. Cover the carrots asap to keep the carrot fly off once you have finished thinning.
6. Remember that with Peas and Sweetcorn, the natural sugars begin turning to starch as soon as they are picked - the sooner you eat or cook them the sweeter they will taste. For the best possible taste, you are talking in terms of minutes rather than hours or days. Try eating a few raw Peas when you pick them and leave a couple of pods for a day or so and try them again - you should taste the difference easily. Peas are supposed to be harvested from the bottom upwards, however the Pods do not always seem to co-operate in this. Regular picking is important for a good crop. Pinch out the growing tips once the first pods are ready to increase yield.
7. Check all brassicas to make sure that the wind has not loosened them and firm down if required. Some people like to earth them up as well. They may need a little extra Nitrogenous feed at this time of year, particularly if we have had a lot of rain.