

March Seasonal Gardening Tips – Subtropical Queensland

March is a time to start thinking about preparing for autumn planting in coming weeks. Although temperatures start to drop off slightly at this time of year – usually towards the end of the month, humidity typically still remains high during the day. Early morning and late afternoon are the best times to be outdoors gardening.

With summer growth and reasonable rainfall, this month is a good time to make compost with surplus green waste. Feed your worm farm to ensure you have plenty of [nutrient-rich soil](#) and [potting mix](#) for growing autumn and winter crops in the next six months. Beneficial microorganisms are more active in moist soil than when it is dry. So instead of 'making hay while the sun shines' why not '*make compost after rain*'? The basis for a healthy garden is organic matter converted into nutrient-rich soil, so use *every* resource from your garden (or your neighbour's) to recycle the nutrients.

What to Plant in March

Pumpkins, sweet corn and sweet potatoes are starchy tummy-filling vegetables that should be producing well if you're growing them. Perennial spinach varieties like Suranim, Brazilian and Ceylon Spinach, Warrigal Greens, Sambung and Okinawa all do well in the warmer months. Passionfruit, zucchinis, eggplant, tomatoes, cucumbers, capsicums and other summer vegetables should also be growing well if you've [protected crops from fruit fly](#) and they haven't succumbed to fungal diseases or pests! Hang in there, better weather is around the corner with autumn usually starting early April. If you're not sure *when* each of our five seasons start and end, or what to plant each month, refer to the perpetual [Subtropical Planting Guide](#).

It's time to think about ingredients for warming winter soups, curries and stir fries in coming months and plan to grow these foods. This month is an ideal time to plant root crops like [garlic](#), radishes and carrots, and our favourite fruit, strawberries. Green Harvest have suitable varieties as well as seedlings and a wide range of herbs, vegetables, flowers, fruit, seeds and green manures to choose from.

If you enjoy your [peas](#), now is the time to start sourcing seeds. Be ready to plant *after* the humidity disappears and cooler temperatures arrive for at least a week around the end of the month. If you want a head start, sow seedlings (bush/dwarf) for a quick harvest, followed by climbing varieties like snow peas and sugar snaps. Try raising peas as [microgreens](#) now and plant out some seedlings when the humidity drops. They will keep you well fed in crunchy shoots till then.

Issues to watch out for:

- **Humidity** is continuing to create a moist environment which is ideal for diseases like powdery mildew, black sooty mould and root rot as a result of waterlogging. It may also be a good time to reinvigorate and [refresh old potting mix](#). Don't try to grow in dead dry dirt! Rotate any crops from the same plant families to avoid potting mix harbouring pests or diseases. Trim back plants that are too crowded. Good air flow helps avoid many fungal diseases. Water the soil not the plants too. Spraying leaves can create a moist environment for fungal spores to grow. Water early morning so leaves dry out during the day.

- **Nutrient loss.** Summer rain can cause some of the soluble soil nutrients to leach out of the soil, starving your plants of the minerals they need for healthy growth. Check leaves for signs of nutrient deficiencies such as pale or unusual streaked patterns. A quick fix is to apply [compost](#), slow-release pelletised organic fertiliser, liquid seaweed or diluted worm casting leachate to help replenish nutrients and trace elements to sustain new growth. Cover the soil with mulch at all times.



- **Citrus leaf miner.** These pesky little sapsuckers continue to be a common problem even towards the end of summer. They mostly mainly target new growth on citrus trees. Snip off any affected leaves and throw in the bin. The sooner the better as they spread quickly. You really need to keep on top of this on a daily basis. I use a number of different strategies to tackle this pest. I hang [eco-CLM traps](#) to capture males and reduce population levels then spray new growth with [eco-oil](#) on both sides of leaves to ensure good coverage. Spray every 5-14 days whenever new growth is present to deter the moth laying fresh eggs.

- **Insect Pests.** Grasshoppers, snails and slugs are still active and will be while there's heat and moisture. Handpick off your plants early morning. Check for the offenders under leaves, look for slimy trails, damaged leaves or fruit. Feed to your birds or chickens. Not much longer to wait and you'll get a break!

Garden Tasks

- Fertilise fruit trees to support fruit set and growth and collect any fallen fruit to prevent fruit flies.
- Grow crops in portable pots for easy care and more control over microclimates.
- Desucker bananas, hold moisture in your soil with mulch and strike perennial semi-hardwood cuttings.
- Transplant strawberry suckers and bag tomatoes if not already to prevent stink bug and fruit fly damage.

Helpful Gardening Guides

Refer to my laminated double-sided [Subtropical Planting Guide](#) for what to plant now, more pests to watch out for and other key tasks. The perpetual [Moon Calendar Gardening Guide](#) also provides you with exact dates to fine-tune your planting, fertilising, propagation, grafting and sowing activities for optimum abundance. [Learn more about Moon Gardening](#) and [save money when buying both guides with this Special Offer](#).



I hope you've enjoyed these tips. May the year ahead be filled with an abundance of good health and harvests!

Kind regards,



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